

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Contact:

Gwyn Donohue
Director of Communications and Public Affairs
gwyn@pijac.org, 202-452-1525 x1080

**Statement from Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council President and CEO Mike Bober on
Study in Spain Linking COVID-19 Risk and Dog Walking**

“We at the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council are concerned that statements made in a new study regarding the risk of COVID-19 contagion and dog walking could be misinterpreted and cause the public to unnecessarily limit or cease their interactions with pets. It is essential to note that the activity that was reported in the study to increase the risk of contagion was walking a dog outdoors, NOT interacting with the animal itself. The only correlation to a greater risk of infection that could reasonably have been drawn, given the limited information collected, was leaving the home and therefore being exposed to a greater number of potentially infected individuals. The leading scientific authorities in the United States, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), continue to maintain that there is no evidence to suggest that animals play an important role in the transmission of COVID-19 and there is no justification in taking measures against companion animals that may compromise their welfare. Hundreds of thousands of people around the world have safely brought pets into their homes both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, where they have benefited from the scientifically-proven emotional and physical health benefits of the human-animal bond. We urge the public to follow CDC guidelines available at cdc.gov/covid19 regarding interacting with people and pets both within and outside your household, and to consult a veterinarian if you have any concerns about your pets’ health.”

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About PIJAC

Founded in 1971, the [Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council](http://pijac.org) (PIJAC) serves as the legislative and regulatory voice of the responsible pet care community, working to promote animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, foster environmental stewardship, and ensure the availability of healthy pets. PIJAC members include retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, manufacturers’ representatives, pet hobbyists, and other trade organizations.