



Research to protect, treat and cure animals.

## EARLIER DETECTION OF CARDIOMYOPATHY

Cardiomyopathy, a weakness of the heart muscle, is the most commonly occurring heart disease in large dogs. The condition most often affects Doberman pinschers, boxers and Great Danes. Affected dogs show signs such as fainting and abdominal swelling or trouble breathing.

“Once you see these signs, the heart disease is already severe. What we’d like to do is identify dogs before they come in with these symptoms, because by that time, their prognosis is not very good,” explains Dr. Mark Oyama, a Foundation-funded investigator at the University of Illinois.

Current diagnostic techniques are expensive and time consuming, including electrocardiograms (ECGs), X-rays and ultrasounds. With Morris Animal Foundation funding, Dr. Oyama and his team examined three blood tests that may help veterinarians identify whether a dog is in the early stages of heart disease without having to perform the more complicated tests.

“The earlier we can identify this disease, the better chance we have of slowing its progression,” says Dr. Oyama. “There is no treatment to stop the disease, but these blood tests could give us a head start to treat the dogs before there are catastrophic signs.”

The tests developed in this study aren’t ready yet for general use by veterinarians, but there is interest in developing commercially available versions. Dr. Oyama believes that a commercial test will be available within the next few years. At that time, it can complement the conventional tests that veterinarians already use.

**YOU CAN HELP.** *Each year Morris Animal Foundation funds numerous studies to explore new diagnostic tools and treatments for canine heart disease. [Make a donation today.](#)*