**Veterinary Financial Assistance (VFA) Program –**

**Discussing Costs and Treatment Plans with Your Veterinarian**

As a consumer, it is important to discuss the cost for any proposed veterinary care with your local veterinarian. Asking about the specifics of care and associated costs will demonstrate to your veterinarian the value you place on the well-being of your guide dog or K9 Buddy and that you are an educated consumer.

If you are requesting financial assistance for veterinary care, we ask you to actively assist in the management of your dog’s veterinary expenses. Be sure to ask about treatment options and what the anticipated total charges for a visit will be. Veterinary hospitals should be able to provide an itemized estimate when requested. This information will also need to be communicated to the VFA department, before treatments are performed whenever possible, in order for GDB to provide financial assistance.

As you review options and estimates, you may come up with additional questions that you would like to discuss further with your veterinarian.

As the cost of treatments escalate, some things to discuss with your veterinarian include:

* Is it appropriate to address a medical issue step-by-step, rather than all at once?
* Are there any optional items on the estimate?
* Is there a service dog discount? Many veterinarians provide discounted services for working guide dogs, but sometimes only when asked.

We are happy to speak with you and your veterinarian if you have questions about the best treatment option for your dog. Our VFA staff all have experience working in the veterinary field and are available as an additional resource to help answer questions about veterinary care, regardless of whether or not you are seeking financial assistance.

By being a proactive consumer, you can play a major role in managing the costs of our VFA Program and ensuring fiduciary responsibility to our donors who make this program possible.