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IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

American Association of Feline Practitioners Opposes Declawing of Cats

Hillsborough, NJ (September 6, 2017) – The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) has revised its previous 2015 position statement on declawing to strongly oppose declawing (onychectomy) as an elective procedure.

Scratching is a normal feline behavior. It is the obligation of veterinarians to provide cat owners with education on normal scratching behaviors and options for cats to exhibit appropriate scratching behavior in the home. The AAFP’s position stresses the need for veterinary teams to educate cat caregivers as many are unaware that declawing is a surgical amputation of the third phalanx (or ‘toe bone’).

“The AAFP has been the leader in the world of feline medicine and veterinary care. It is appropriate that our organization has taken the lead with this strong position statement opposing the declawing of cats,” states Dr. Marcus Brown, Chair of the AAFP’s Welfare Committee.

The AAFP supports a path of change that focuses on educating veterinary teams and cat caregivers in an effort to help them learn and understand in order to make a future impact that sees lasting results. Veterinary teams will be supplied with a toolkit of resources to assist them in educating cat caregivers about why cats have claws, why cats scratch inanimate objects, best practices for living alongside a cat with claws, ideal scratching surfaces, training cats to scratch appropriately, and troubleshooting inappropriate scratching in the home.

These materials provide guidance to veterinary teams and have been freed up for any veterinary practice, including non-members, to download: www.catvets.com/scratching. This information is also available to cat caregivers which can be found on the consumer website, The Cat Community, powered by the AAFP: catfriendly.com/scratching.

Dr. Nancy Suska, co-author of the statement, explains, “With proper client education from the initial veterinary visit and onward, our clients will be able to provide their kittens and cats with

the essential means to exhibit this natural feline function. The American Association of Feline Practitioners has produced many resources, for both owner and veterinary team, to educate about natural feline scratching behavior and alternatives to declawing.”

Other changes to the previous statement include additional resources. To view the revised position statement in its entirety, visit: www.catvets.com/guidelines/position-statements/declawing.

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About the American Association of Feline Practitioners

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) improves the health and welfare of cats by supporting high standards of practice, continuing education, and scientific investigation. The AAFP has a long-standing reputation and track record in the veterinary community for facilitating high standards of practice and publishes guidelines for practice excellence which are available to veterinarians on the AAFP website. Over the years, the AAFP has encouraged veterinarians to continuously re-evaluate preconceived notions of practice strategies in an effort to advance the quality of feline medicine practiced. Launched in 2012, the Cat Friendly Practice® (CFP) program was created to improve the treatment, handling, and overall healthcare provided to cats. Its purpose is to equip veterinary practices with the tools and resources to reduce stress associated with the visit and elevate the standard of care provided to cats. Find more information at www.catvets.com.