

# The OFA/CHIC Health Registry for Scotties

By Marcia Dawson

On January 16, 2006, the STCA Board made history by voting to establish a Scottish Terrier Registry with the Canine Health Information Center, better known as CHIC. The Board appointed a Registry Committee which was charged with investigating existing registries, laying the groundwork for the Scottish Terrier Registry, recommending the test requirements for the Scotties on the CHIC registry, and developing programs to educate the Scottish Terrier community about CHIC as well as to encourage participation in the registry.

In the 13 years since that time, the Scottie world has embraced the CHIC registry. As of this writing, there are 382 Scottish Terriers listed in the CHIC registry. In the OFA databases, there are 842 Scotties tested for vWD and 130 Scotties tested for CMO, 633 tested for patella luxation, 210 Scotties with Thyroid results, and 321 Scotties with eye exam results (all registries). Some of the Scotties on the OFA site are on their way to the CHIC registry, pending the completion of requirements. The STCA has encouraged breeders to enter their Scotties into the CHIC registry in order to achieve the elite Breeder of Merit Honor Roll status. But there is still some confusion and a few questions. The intent of this article is to try to review and simplify a complicated process, and hopefully answer some of those questions.

## ***First of all, what is a health registry?***

Very basically, a formal health registry is a repository of health data on dogs, managed by an independent and reliable organization such as the OFA. The health data is generated from the results of OFA accepted testing protocols, and these results are voluntarily entered and registered by the owners of the dogs. All results are entered, including normal, abnormal, clear, carrier and affected. OFA manages the registries and will release all of these results, including affected and carrier status, only if the owner of the dog gives permission at the time of registration.

## ***OK then, what is the difference between a Registry and a Database?***

A formal Registry such as OFA is established to record and preserve health data generated from the results of standardized, published testing protocols accepted by OFA. A database, such as the STCA's CA (Cerebellar Abiotrophy) database, is a listing of affected individual dogs, maintained by the club and updated as new cases are diagnosed. A database serves to record and track a disease spread, as well as to assist in pedigree risk analysis for proposed breedings. The STCA can decide to set up a database for any disease or disorder in our breed, such as Bladder Cancer, Lymphoma, Cushings, elevated liver enzymes or Scottie Cramp in addition to CA. In time, any disease listed in a database can become part of a formal OFA Registry, once the diagnostic testing protocols are established, standardized and accepted by OFA. A Registry then is a kind of specialized database.

## ***Isn't OFA just about Hip Dysplasia?***

It is true the OFA was founded in 1966 as a registry to record radiographic evaluations of hip dysplasia in German Shepherds and Golden Retrievers. But today the OFA has expanded well beyond the scope of orthopedic disorders only. OFA records and registers test results for a wide variety of orthopedic and genetic conditions in literally thousands of dogs. The OFA's mission is to reduce disease in dogs and other companion species such as cats, by encouraging testing, maintaining databases and disseminating information about orthopedic and other genetic diseases, and supporting research. Currently, Scotties can participate in several OFA registries including CMO, thyroid, vWD, hip dysplasia, Legg-Calve-Perthes disease, patella luxation, elbow dysplasia, cardiac disease, congenital deafness, sebaceous adenitis, and genetic eye disorders.

## ***Are OFA and CHIC the same thing?***

No, but together they are part of the whole picture. CHIC is a part of the larger OFA registry system, a more elite "registry within a registry". It is a centralized canine health database jointly sponsored by the AKC/Canine Health Foundation (AKC/CHF) and the OFA. To be eligible for CHIC, your

dog's test results must first be registered with OFA. Then, once all the breed specific testing requirements are satisfied, no matter what the result (normal, clear, carrier, or affected), your dog is automatically awarded CHIC listing. The genius behind CHIC is that the testing requirements are

determined not by some distant authority of OFA, but rather by each national club in order to address health issues unique to each breed. CHIC is therefore a centralized, permanent health record that is custom designed by each breed club, an invaluable resource for all breeders, owners, and researchers.

### ***How will registries like CHIC help us breed healthier Scotties?***

Information is power. The more we know about the health of our dogs, the better off we will be. The more we have access to all records of *all* Scotties, the better we will be able to assess risk for planned breedings. The whole point is to maximize a healthy outcome in a litter. To be absolutely clear, CHIC certification goes to any Scottie that completes the required tests--whether the test results are normal, abnormal, clear, carrier or affected. There is no perfect dog, nor is there any pedigree that does not contain risk for some disorder. But by sharing information about their dogs on a registry like CHIC, responsible breeders can all participate in an honest and open process. CHIC is not about bragging rights for a breeder. It is about the health and future of our breed. It is, very simply, the right thing to do.

### ***How will CHIC (or any registry) benefit a Scottie owner who does not breed?***

A specialized registry like CHIC will ultimately be of more use to a breeder than a non-breeder. Understandably, few Scottie owners will decide to go to the expense and effort to satisfy all the requirements for a CHIC listing for pets not intended for breeding stock. However, **all** Scottie owners can participate with their Scotties in any of the OFA registries, with even a single test result! And, as an added bonus, the entry of any "affected" Scottie into OFA is free of charge. Will a registry ensure that the puppy you want to buy for a pet will grow to healthy old age with no heart-breaking or painful problems along the way? No. A registry cannot guarantee the health of any dog. But satisfaction comes from contributing to an important process like a health registry, even if you do not personally reap the benefit. The future of our Scotties is at stake, and all data is essential to understanding the genetic health of the entire Scottie community.

### ***OK, what are the steps to getting a Scottie into CHIC?***

**Step 1:** All Scotties must have **permanent identification** for entry into the registry. This can be in the form of a Microchip or tattoo.

**Step 2:** All Scotties must have a **vWD Test**

- \* DNA based test from approved lab (or vWD Clear by Parentage- see definition in sidebar);
- \* Copy of vWD Test results must be sent to OFA along with proper form;

**Step 3:** All Scotties must have a **Patella Exam**

- \*Can be performed by your own veterinarian as part of a routine office visit;
- \*Scotties must be 12 months or older for OFA registration;
- \*Test results plus OFA fee (\$15 for normal result) must be sent to OFA on proper form.
- \*Abnormal test results are registered with OFA at no charge.

**Step 4:** All Scotties must have **ONE** of the following three Health Electives:

**1. Eye Certification Registry (ECR) Exam for inherited eye diseases**

- \*Must be done by a Board Certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist.
- \*Results must be registered with ECR
- \*Normal ECR results are automatically sent to OFA.
- \*Abnormal ECR results are registered by the owner, at no charge.

**Or**

**2. Hypothyroidism (Autoimmune Thyroiditis)**

- \*OFA guidelines for full thyroid test panel must be followed;

- \*Test must be done at OFA approved lab;
- \*Filled out OFA Form and OFA fee (\$15) must be sent to lab with blood sample.

Or

### 3. CMO DNA Test from approved lab

- \* VetGen will run both vWD and CMO tests off the same Swab
- \* Copy of test results must be sent to OFA along with form
- \* For special deal on registration fee see below.

Note: **All forms** and **detailed instructions** are available online at the OFA web site (see below).

### ***My dogs don't have any thyroid or patella problems! How did the Committee decide on these particular tests?***

The Committee looked at disease prevalence and high carrier frequencies published by the 1995, 2005 and 2015 STCA Health Surveys. Of the top 10 most reported conditions in these surveys, only a handful qualified for CHIC registry status at this time with available diagnostic tests. Although individual family lines may be free of hypothyroidism, patella luxation, or genetic eye disease, these are all testable disorders in our breed with significant prevalence overall. As research continues and new tests come available, the HTF will update the testing requirements to reflect these changes.

### ***Why do I have to keep testing for vWD? Isn't it gone from the breed?***

It is true that we are not seeing or hearing about vWD in Scotties as much these days, but keep in mind that the mutation responsible for VWD has not disappeared. It is still lurking in the genetic makeup of the breed. It has been pushed deeper and farther away from current breeding stock by the use of the DNA test. But mutations are by definition unpredictable and can potentially happen at any point! Scottie breeders must remain vigilant and continue to use the vWD test as recommended. (See below for Clear by Parentage requirements.)

### ***This is getting expensive! Is there a way to cut the costs of all of these tests?***

It is true we will all have to invest in this Registry. But the costs we all bear in contributing to this Registry will ultimately far outweigh the cost in producing puppies with genetic disease. The returns on our investment will be healthier Scotties for the future! And there are some cost saving deals available too. Watch for announcements of **discounted** vWD, CMO, Microchip, and ECR clinics sponsored by the STCA HTF and other breed clubs at specialties and all breed shows.

### ***Who can we contact for more information?***

STCA CHIC Liaison Helen Prince [haprince@comcast.net](mailto:haprince@comcast.net)  
STCA HTF Chairman Marcia Dawson [hijinkscot@gmail.com](mailto:hijinkscot@gmail.com)

OFA Website <http://www.offa.org>  
CHIC Website <http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/>  
STCA Website [www.stca.biz](http://www.stca.biz)  
VetGen Website [www.vetgen.com](http://www.vetgen.com)

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## **vWD Clear By Parentage**

For the purposes of CHIC listing, a Scottie can be designated vWD Clear by Parentage only if **ALL** of the conditions below are satisfied:

- Sire and Dam and Pup are all AKC DNA profiled;
- Sire and Dam and Pup are all permanently id'd with microchip or tattoo;
- Sire and Dam are both VetGen vWD Tested Clear and results are registered with OFA
- The Clear by Parentage designation will be granted for the first generation only at this time.