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PetPartners, Inc., the Newest Subsidiary of Independence Holding Company, Announces Extension of Long-standing Relationship with The American Kennel Club

NEW YORK, March 27, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Independence Holding Company (NYSE:IHC) announced that PetPartners, Inc., its newly acquired subsidiary that markets and administers pet insurance, has extended its relationship with the American Kennel Club (AKC).

"We are pleased to welcome IHC and this new relationship," remarked Dennis B. Sprung, President and CEO of the American Kennel Club. "We are happy to have a strong and dedicated partner with an extensive history of providing quality pet health insurance. We look forward to helping American pet owners and breeders become more familiar with pet health insurance."

The AKC registers hundreds of thousands of puppies each year and PetPartners markets insurance plans through www.akcpetinsurance.com to those new registrants, offering new owners a means to ensure their dogs' health and well-being as they grow.

"The pet health insurance market continues to grow robustly with average annual growth rates of 12%, but yet, less than 2% of the dog and cat population in the United States is insured today," shared Rick Faucher, President of PetPartners and IHC's Pet Health Division. "The partnership that AKC and PetPartners continue to have is remarkable. The message is getting out to new pet owners and the growth in policy sales continues to rise steadily. We look forward to deploying IHC's resources and expertise in designing and distributing insurance to expanding on that growth," Mr. Faucher added.

IHC has been in the pet health insurance business since 2011. PetPartners is a pet insurance administrator based in Raleigh, North Carolina, which sells pet health insurance covering dogs and cats nationally, and has marketed pet insurance to AKC registrants since 2002.

"From the first meetings with the AKC and PetPartners management, it was clear there was a longstanding success story upon which we can build," commented David T. Kettig, Chief Operating Officer of Independence Holding Company. "IHC adds marketing, sales support and product resources to the equation and we look forward to accelerating the growth of insurance within the AKC constituency."

"In addition, given PetPartners' flexible administrative platform which is able to accommodate payroll deduction, IHC will be able to bring pet insurance to the worksite marketplace through its extensive broker and national account relationships," stated Mr. Kettig.

For more information, please contact Jeena Choi at Jeena.Choi@IHCGroup.com or Brandi Hunter at BTH@AKC.org. Please visit www.petpartners.com, www.akcpetinsurance.com and www.akc.org for additional resources.

About The IHC Group

Independence Holding Company (NYSE:IHC) is a holding company that is principally engaged in underwriting, administering and/or distributing group and individual specialty benefit products, including disability, supplemental health, pet, and group life insurance through its subsidiaries since 1980. The IHC Group owns three insurance companies (Standard Security Life Insurance Company of New York, Madison National Life Insurance Company, Inc. and Independence American Insurance Company), and IHC Specialty Benefits, Inc., a technology-driven insurance sales and marketing company that creates value for insurance producers, carriers and consumers (both individuals and small businesses) through a suite of proprietary tools and products (including ACA plans and small group medical stop-loss). All products are placed with highly rated carriers.

About American Kennel Club

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organization, which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its more than 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 22,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations

each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog tests. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Humane Fund, AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Reunite and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit www.akc.org.

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Become a fan of the American Kennel Club on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter @AKCDogLovers.

About PetPartners Inc.

PetPartners history dates back to the 1980s when British-owner and leading innovator in pet insurance, Sir. John D. Spurling created a pet health insurance company exclusively for the Kennel Club in Great Britain. PetPartners provided pet health insurance to dogs and puppies in the United Kingdom for nearly two decades before its arrival in the United States. Since 2002, PetPartners has been the exclusive provider of pet health insurance protection to registrants of the American Kennel Club through the AKC Pet Insurance. In 2004, PetPartners was selected by the Cat Fanciers' Association, the largest registry of purebred cats, to provide health insurance to CFA registrants. In 2009, PetPartners began to offer its new PetPartners-branded products both to individuals and groups (such as associations, companies and credit unions). PetPartners became a member of The IHC Group in 2017.

Forward-looking Statements

Certain statements and information contained in this release may be considered "forward-looking statements," such as statements relating to management's views with respect to future events and financial performance. Such forward-looking statements are subject to risks, uncertainties and other factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from historical experience or from future results expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Potential risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, economic conditions in the markets in which IHC operates, new federal or state governmental regulation, IHC's ability to effectively operate, integrate and leverage any past or future strategic acquisition, and other factors which can be found in IHC's other news releases and filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. IHC expressly disclaims any duty to update its forward-looking statements unless required by applicable law.

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