



# Nationwide

07 April 2022

## Nationwide celebrates 40 years of pet insurance history

If you're old enough to remember where you were in 1982, then you'll remember that's the year Michael Jackson released his "Thriller" album, the television series "Cheers" debuted, and "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" made us cry at the movies.

It's also the year Nationwide — then known as Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) — issued the first pet health insurance policy in the United States to TV's "Lassie." The occasion was marked with a press conference on April 8, 1982 featuring the famous collie at the podium.

From its founding by a group of veterinarians four decades ago, Nationwide now protects more than 1.1 million pets, and the roster of insured animals include more than just those that are furry and four-legged. As the only U.S. pet health insurer that provides coverage for avian and exotic animals, Nationwide serves a wide range of pets.

- Behind dogs and cats, rabbits and guinea pigs are our third and fourth most popular species.
- Bearded dragons are the most popular species among our reptiles.
- Among our feathered friends, cockatiels are the most common type of bird.

In other historical "firsts," Nationwide began offering pet health insurance as a voluntary benefit in 1999. Today, 9,000 companies and associations, including half of the Fortune 500, offer Nationwide pet health insurance as a voluntary benefit for employees.

"It is an honor and privilege that millions of pet families have trusted us with their precious pets over four decades," says Nationwide's Chief Pet Officer, Heidi Sirota. "We are committed to creating innovative pet protection solutions that deliver more care for more pets for many years to come."

Visit [Nationwide Pet](#) to learn more about available plans and coverages.

<https://news.nationwide.com/en-us/nationwide-celebrates-40-years-of-pet-insurance-history/>