Conclusion:

After contacting 100 veterinary clinics, I received 85 responses. From the data seen in the spreadsheets (link to industry and non-industry pages), 84 (or 98.8 %) of those responses informed me that those offices do not keep data other than their patient charts on the occurrence of feline cancer. The one place that said they kept data like that has a research lab but they were too busy to talk to me.

The information I gathered from my research with current California law (link to Calif codes of law) and my contacts with government agencies (link to gov and vet agencies), state veterinary officials, and many veterinary clinics, supports my hypothesis in that there is no law requiring animal cancer data to be submitted and very few veterinary clinics are collecting this data.

My conversations with many doctors and agencies help conclude that the reason epidemiological data is not gathered on animal cancer is because cancer is not transmissible to humans and domesticated animals are not helpful sentinels to public health. Dr. Monika Connally told me the main reason feline cancer rates are not kept track of is that cats do not serve as good sentinels of public health because some cats do not go outside at all, and some do not interact with the environment like wild animals do. “A lot of them sleep on a pillow and eat Fancy Feast all day,” she said.

Future Applications:

My research does not end here. I am continuing this research for my Advanced Composition I-Search Paper and my Health and Bioscience Career Pathway Senior Project. I plan to continue contacting Government and Veterinary Agencies as well as public health officials to see if this information is worth the money to collect. I will search for how animal disease data is collected and used. I will learn how to write a proposal for the California State Legislature to see if this type of law would be considered.

If there was a law that required veterinarians to submit data to the state regarding the occurrence of cancer in the animals they see, this could be another way to detect environmental hazards before too many people become ill, diseased, or deceased.

Recommendations:

There is always room for improvement in any experiment or investigation. If I were to do this experiment over again, I would make a few adjustments.

1. Begin my early investigation process a little earlier so I would have time to encounter the dead end in obtaining cancer data and change my focus with more time left.

2. Contact a larger number of veterinary clinics.

3. Try to find the significance of human cancer clusters. Find out if even this data is used as evidence in an investigation.

4. Find out if any state or region in this state collects data from veterinarians on animal cancer rates.

5. Find the records that Alameda and Contra Costa counties collected as well as the monograph that Albert Dorn and Willian Prester created from this information.

6. Contact the department within the state that would have jurisdiction over this information if it was kept and see how much it would cost to collect and analyze this data.