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### **POLAR BEAR GLACIER UNDERGOING SOPHISTICATED TESTING FOR ASSESSMENT OF LIVER CANCER**

TACOMA, Wash. – Veterinarians at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium are consulting with oncology experts and working to obtain sophisticated imaging tests on Glacier, a 19-year-old polar bear recently diagnosed with liver cancer.

The male bear, who came to the zoo as a 15-month-old orphan in 1997, also suffers from heart disease, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium head veterinarian Dr. Karen Wolf said.

A heart murmur and a mass in his abdomen detected during a routine physical exam on Feb. 21 warranted further assessment, Wolf said. A veterinary cardiologist was consulted and an echocardiogram confirmed heart disease. During the same exam, follow up abdominal ultrasound and biopsies confirmed the presence of a large, malignant liver tumor.

Glacier is receiving cardiac medications to help manage his heart disease. A computed tomography, or CT, scan is scheduled to help veterinarians further assess Glacier's condition and determine the size and exact location of the tumor. It also could show whether the cancer has spread to other organs.

The Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium veterinary team is working with other experts across multiple disciplines including cardiology, radiology, and oncology to provide the best care possible for Glacier, Wolf said.

"We are using every diagnostic tool available to assess Glacier's condition as we formulate a treatment plan for him," she added.

Polar bears are listed as a vulnerable species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, or IUCN. The median life expectancy for a male polar bear in the wild is 20.7 years, according to statistics from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium has two other polar bears, Blizzard, 19, and Boris, 29. Polar bears are on exhibit daily in the zoo's Arctic Tundra area.

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*Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).*

