

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 24, 2013

Not taking your pet to the vet can be criminal
Couple convicted on animal cruelty charges

Los Angeles, CA – Elsa Lopez and her husband, Alberto Chavarria, were each convicted of 1 misdemeanor animal cruelty charge yesterday, as the result of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA) animal cruelty investigation. Lopez and Chavarria were both sentenced to 36 months summary probation, counseling, state-mandated fees and they may own no animals for the next three (3) years after pleading no contest to violations of penal code 597.1a.

spcaLA's investigation revealed that Lopez and Chavarria let their 10-year-old American Bulldog, *Chubbs*, suffer in pain for months from an untreated, open and oozing malignant skin tumor and a severe infestation of fleas and ticks, before he was humanely euthanized. The couple did not seek veterinary treatment for Chubbs.

"When someone throws the family dog out the window or stabs a cat, we all know it's abuse," said spcaLA President, Madeline Bernstein. "But letting an animal suffer for months and denying him veterinary care often seems even crueler to me. Victims like Chubbs can only languish in pain until spcaLA Humane Officers, or other law enforcement, intervene."

The investigation of Chubbs' former owners began when spcaLA Humane Officers responded to an anonymous tip from the spcaLA Animal Cruelty Tip Line. spcaLA is the only private animal welfare organization that is also Law Enforcement in Los Angeles.

To report animal cruelty, call the spcaLA Animal Cruelty Tip Line at 1-800-540-SPCA (7722) or report online at www.spcaLA.com.

For more information, please contact Miriam Davenport at 323-730-5300 x233, cell 323-353-4658 or mdavenport@spcaLA.com.

Since 1877, spcaLA has been the premiere independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.

####