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First Full-Service Airport Veterinary Hospital

New York's JFK airport unveils comprehensive veterinary services on the tarmac.

[JoAnna Lou](#) [2]

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This month the first-ever full-service airport veterinary hospital opened at New York City's JFK airport. [AirHeart Pet Hospital](#) [3], inspired by aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart, is part of another first-
-The ARK, the world's first privately owned, 24-hour animal terminal and airport quarantine center. The ARK's 65 million dollar facility is located right on the tarmac at JFK, spanning 14 acres.

The hospital will provide veterinary services for travelers, military personnel, employees of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, JFK airport employees, and area residents. At the moment AirHeart provides primary and urgent care, with plans to add 24-hour emergency care.

As many as 15,000 animals, including 4,000 horses, pass through JFK each year. There also are about 2,000 working canines with the military and government agencies who may also need care.

"Because of our location, we will face some of the most interesting medical challenges," explains AirHeart veterinarian Lauren Jordon. "So we have ensured our state-of-the-art facility and the professional staff are fully equipped to meet any issue that comes our way."

Dr. Linda D. Mittel, a senior extension associate at the Animal Health Diagnostics Center at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine, believes AirHeart will also play an important role in curbing the spread of animal and avian-borne diseases.

Animals are quarantined for three to 30 days depending on where they originated and their physical condition and vaccination records. AirHeart staff will be ever-vigilant for rare and contagious diseases and will be working closely with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

The quarantine center at The ARK features 48 climate-controlled stalls for horses, which have state-of-the-art biosecurity designs to prevent disease. There's also an aviary that has three rooms for staff to feed, clean and care for birds under supervision of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As more people travel with their pets, this hospital is going to be a much needed service at the busy JFK airport. Being at such a busy crossroads, I also hope the AirHeart veterinarians will have the opportunity to collect unique data that might be useful in future research.

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JoAnna Lou is a New York City-based researcher, writer and agility enthusiast.

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