

YCAS Evaluation by UCD Koret Shelter Medicine Program Presentation on 6/3/10; Transcribed notes from L.M. Lubin

Present : Sheriff Prieto, Captain Faille, Vicky Fletcher, Barb & Ruth (Animal Control Officers), Sgt. Buckley, Laura Minnus, Dr. Rich Burch, Megan & Angela (adoption services), Drs. Hurley, Newbury & Wagner, Ken Bannaesh (Shelter Medicine), Kim Kinney & Shelley Bryant (YC SPCA), Deputy Christopher Lee, Margot Wilcox (volunteer), and Lori Lubin (former volunteer)

Introduction by Dr. Hurley :

- Focus on improvements, not intended as criticism, lots of positives
- They had limited schedule, so focused and limited 1-day consultation.
- Shelter was not fully staffed at time of visit, did not see everything (including field services, customer service, adoptions)
- Looked at # of animals, # of kennels, and staffing

Positives :

- Caring staff
- Priority on animal welfare
- Openness to cooperation

Observations :

- Absence of Systems :
 - Unclear line of authority
 - Lack of important protocols (e.g. up for adoption or rescue? Only word of mouth)
 - Inadequate medical and treatment records
 - Underutilized computer records
 - Lack of daily accountability
- Inadequate staff and facilities for animal activities
- Blurred and inappropriate roles for vet and animal care staff
- High euthanasia rate for cats (3 out of 4)

Resulting Problems :

- Haphazard or missed care (“irregular care and problems hurt animals”)
- Prolonged stays
- Frequent illness (majority of animals get ill – diarrhea, upper respiratory infection)
- Unsanitary/dangerous conditions
- Needless expense (for illness and recurring treatment)
- Increased euthanasia (especially for cats)

Rommendations :

- Do best with what you have
 - Match roles with tasks
 - Develop efficient systems
 - Decrease time at shelter (“high priority”)
 - Identify limitations (need to “pick and choose”)
- Develop plan to achieve
 - Increase staff (“what particular types”)
 - New facility / facility improvement
 - Spay and neuter program (decrease euthanasia)

Shelter Staffing :

- Inventory
- Rounds
- Basic care (feed, cleaning cages, toy removal)
- Prep for cleaning
- Intake
- Walk through with owners
- Behavior evaluation
- Adoption visits
- Treatment
- Revaccination
- Euthanasia list
- Euthanasia
- Vet assist
- Spay/neuter assist
- Testing
- Dead body bin

Morning Animal Care :

- Haphazard mixed authorities
- Fomite spread (mechanically spread)
 - no way of doing healthy animals and then handling dead ones etc
 - cross contamination occurring because hectic nature
 - all precautions for naught!
- Frequent interruptions
- Lack of follow thru

Surgery :

- Minimal assistance for vet
- Interruptions
- Surgery area used for prep and recovery

- Prolonged surgery time (1.5 hr)
- NOT meeting board requirements

Intake :

- Protocol generally followed BUT
 - Officers not vaccinating all dogs on intake
 - cannot do on truck
 - done in same pens which hold sick dogs
 - no computer near area for data input
 - all officers not comfortable with vaccination
 - Dogs do not get weighed because (euthanasia) room busy
 - BIGGEST ISSUE - same room is a common pathway for disease
 - Space inadequate for cats, unacceptable for dogs
 - No standard for revaccination or deworming
 - Sometimes vet does but inefficient use of time
 - Add consistent deworming for moms, pups and kittens
 - Ideally 100% of dogs + physical exams as well
 - Reconsider intake kennels
 - Use chameleon for revaccination reminders

Treatments :

- Dogs have whiteboard plus blue sheets but NO clear info
- Cats no system, only blue sheets
- Medical notes on post-its
- Blue sheets often fall, misplaced
- Missed treatments
- No label on fluid bags
- Inadequate treatment and testing
- Need to have chameleon records and treatment sheet binders in EVERY room

Feline Disinfection :

- Some cats from adoption placed in playroom for kennel cleaning
 - No disinfection between moving cats back and forth
 - Saw cats with diarrhea there
 - Mitigates all cleaning protocols
 - UCD cleaning study cages
 - Stray cats boxed during cleaning
 - In small cages (cannot even turn around) for too long without food and water
 - No dates on trifactant cleaning solution (ineffective after 7 days)

Canine Disinfection :

- Dogs sprayed with water and chemical disinfectant
- Power sprayers spreading debris everywhere (chemicals, feces)
- Confusion about disinfectant strength
 - lots of chemicals in air
 - respiratory irritation for dogs and people
- Disinfectant dispensers (foaming machines) empty in adoption, almost empty in stray and intake / vehicle cleaning
 - Cleaning with WATER ONLY!
 - No time to check disinfectant levels
 - No system to make sure this does not happen!
 - Better signs, training so staff knows how to use the machines
- Disinfectant in water bowls
- Cages remain wet
 - From cleaning and leaking water bowls
 - Need to be towel dried
- Walkways not cleaned
- Use of inmate cleaning is not cost effective as they do such a poor job

Feline Housing :

- Inadequate number of cages
- Inadequate size – need two cages each in adoption
- Cannot use feral boxes for large cats – cannot lay down or breathe

Canine Housing :

- Serious rodent infestation
- Leaking water bowls
- Cages remain wet
- Damaged wires
- Damaged beds
- Windows do not open
- Use adoption area more

Past Due :

- 10 out of 19 dogs past due out date – could be released (adoption, rescue) but still in stray
- Same for 2 out of 2 puppies
- Same for 9 out of 51 cats

Behavioral Evaluation :

- Done in dirty euthanasia room (visible debris)
- Takes ~90 minutes of staff time per dog
- Frequent interruptions
- Cat used for cat test is stressed
 - no support for efficacy of using cat this way to test dog's reaction
- They always stop at first fail in test
 - Need more information so can be considered for rescue or transfer
 - Do full evaluation so have all the information
- Recommendations :
 - New room
 - Develop shorter evaluation
 - Discontinue current cat use
 - Evaluate immediately for owner surrender or on intake
 - Do temperament test first because just gets worse for dogs in this environment and get false fails (or passes) on exams if done much later
 - Schedule owner surrenders to plan time when staff available for temperament testing

Introduction by Dr. Newbury :

- Does intake match outcomes – see if data works out
- Two years of data 2008-2009
 - Large number of cats in, smaller number out
 - Very steady “live release rate”
 - 50 (out) vs. 150-300+ (in) per month
 - intake going up from year to year
 - dramatic issue with adults, but also kittens
 - COMMUNITY ISSUE – spay and neuter!
 - Dogs
 - Significant number go to rescue or transfer
 - Losing on adoption, lower numbers
 - Live release rate of over 50%
- Length of stay (LOS) – i.e. period until adoption floor, rescue, transfer
 - Need to decrease LOS, will then
 - Decrease # in shelter
 - Give them more space
 - Better health
 - Need efficiency of flow through
 - Currently 1-2 months from intake to adoption floor!!
 - Lack of housing, staff, enrichment
 - Find places where there is unproductive time on animal's pathway

- Vicious cycle of animals waiting – by that time they are sick and in ISO
- Contacted Vicky Lotz (attorney) – need to hold only for 72 hrs after intake, does NOT have to be business days even in Hayden Law

Time Issues :

- Total 11-15 hrs per day for flow thru only (does NOT include staffing hrs for basic care)
 - Dog intake, euthanasia, behavioral evaluation : 8-11 hrs
 - Feline flow thru : 2-4 hrs
- Basic care
 - BARE MINIMUM : 15 min / animal
 - 9 min clean / 6 min feed
 - Requires 25 hrs per day of staff time (on top of flow thru)
- Not enough time limits capacity for care
- Need to decrease number of animals to care for
- Restructure and reevaluate system to achieve care without limits (HSUS regulations)
- NO ONE there to meet adopters, adversely affects adoptions

Feline Model :

- Stray hold ONLY three days
 - Longer times DOES NOT help increase in return
- Get more like 10-15 cats in house, then can cut house in cages to increase size
- 1 ½ lb healthy kitten can be spayed/neutered at six weeks
- increase health, welfare, manage capacity for care, increase funds for preventive programs
- If 10 day LOS, need about 10 cats in adoption
 - Choose kitten/adult ratio based on adoption statistics
- MAJOR ISSUE – the community has NO low-cost spay and neuter!

Canine Model :

- 3 day LOS
 - With 26 housing units (use every other), have 10-15 dogs in adoption assuming typical stay 21 days
 - Release to rescue ASAP – they pick up in a few days!

Recommendations :

- Discontinue “Deceased Animal Deposit” – against the law to leave cadavers
- Improve adoptions

- More marketing
 - Limiting number of choices, keep at recommended numbers to increase adoption
 - VOLUNTEERS – no one there to help!
- Discontinue their “foster program”
 - Inadequate pre-screening, training, follow-up, emergency precautions
 - Takes away time and resources to no advantage
- Better PICK & CHOOSE what programs most important!
 - DO NOT DO EVERYTHING BADLY!!
- VOLUNTEERS!
- Streamline behavioral evaluation (critical point in flow)
 - More staff, shorter evaluation, on fewer animals
 - E.g. Sac County uses 15 min test
- Better communication
- Training in chameleon to improve efficiency
- Open stray to public so they can see all dogs
 - Public can find adoptable dogs that they would not otherwise
 - Wall off difficult dogs
 - Open selection (see e.g. Tampa, San Antonio)
- Daily Evaluation of every animal
- Methodical, must have STRATEGIC PLAN!!!