



Veterinary Care in a Shelter Setting Best Practice



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About Best Practices

“

A procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption
– Merriam-Webster Dictionary

”



Best Practices and Emerging Trends Committee

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About Best Practices



Best Practice Vs. Minimum Standards



Introduction to Shelter Medicine

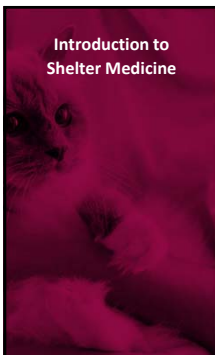


Five Freedoms


- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease
- Freedom to express normal behavior
- Freedom from fear and distress



Introduction to Shelter Medicine



Shelter Medicine Vs. Private Practice



Key Considerations

Veterinary Relationships



- Community Veterinarians
- On site surgical and community health
- Community health and individual animals



Key Considerations

Roles and Responsibilities

- Formalizing relationships
- Formalizing decision making



Key Considerations

Veterinary Team Focus

- Staffing levels
- Authority for decision making
- Population health
- Creation of protocols
- Training and staff education



Key Considerations



Legal Compliance

- State
- Local
- Federal



Goals and Impacts



For Animals

- Improved standard of care and efficiencies
- Reduction in illness
- Improved health of the population and individuals
- Improved disease recognition and response
- Improved population management and reduction in disease outbreaks
- Increase in live outcomes



Goals and Impacts



Anticipated Impacts

- Rise in expectations
- Financial impact
- Professionalization
- Community relationships



Goals and Impacts

Anticipated Impacts

- Including veterinarians in budgeting improves efficiency
- Improved decision making criteria
- Better informational resources available to animal welfare staff



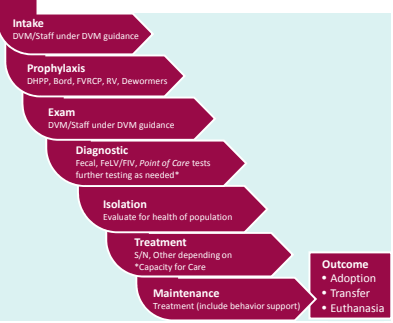
General Components and Requirements

- Admissions – the Individual
 - Free from pain, injury and disease
- Now the “herd”
 - Population Medicine
 - Preventative Care
- Include Shelter Standards
 - Capacity for Care
 - Triage
 - Nutrition
 - Behavioral Health
 - Neonatal Care
 - Outbreak Management
- Partnerships with Local DVMs



General Components and Requirements


Care Flowchart



General Components and Requirements

Triage—immediately upon intake


- Urgent medical issues addressed
- Housed based on disease risk
 - Age (Immunity)
 - Species
 - Exposure



General Components and Requirements

Care Flowchart

Intake
DVM/Staff under DVM guidance



General Components and Requirements

Intake

- History— Often unknown
 - Medical Records, Travel, ID,
 - Includes Behavioral History
 - Complies with State Veterinary Practice Act



General Components and Requirements

Care Flowchart


Intake
DVM/Staff under DVM guidance

Prophylaxis
DRPP, Bord, FVRCP, RV, Dewormers

General Components and Requirements

Intake

- Prophylactic Care
 - Vaccination – ASV, AAHA and AAFP guidelines
 - Deworming – hooks and rounds at a minimum
 - Flea/Tick (Heartworm?)



General Components and Requirements

Care Flowchart

Intake
DVM/Staff under DVM guidance

Prophylaxis
DRPP, Bord, FVRCP, RV, Dewormers


Exam
DVM/Staff under DVM guidance

General Components and Requirements

Intake

Initial Examination at Intake

- Veterinarian or Trained Staff
 - Process for vet examination if needed
 - Regardless, must have isolation authority
 - Vets should examine high risk animals (very young, very old, pre-existing conditions, etc.)
- Document:
 - Age, Weight, and Gender
 - Photo
 - Conditions requiring urgent care
 - Isolation conditions
 - Initiate treatment to address common vet needs



General Components and Requirements


Care Flowchart



General Components and Requirements

Diagnostics

- Access to diagnostics (based on most commonly seen diseases/pathogens)
- Test results can be complicated and should be reviewed by veterinarian
- Heartworm—must be done on dogs >6 months in endemic regions
- FeLV/FIV—depends on incidence and relative risk
- Protocols for positive results




General Components and Requirements

Diagnostics

Point of Care Tests:

- Fecal/parasite screening
- Parvo antigen tests
- Ringworm cultures
- Urinalysis
- PCV/TS
- Blood glucose
- Parvo and panleukopenia titer testing
- Tick-borne disease testing




General Components and Requirements

Diagnostics

Available through diagnostics lab or in-house:

- CBC
- Blood chemistries
- Specific further testing as needed

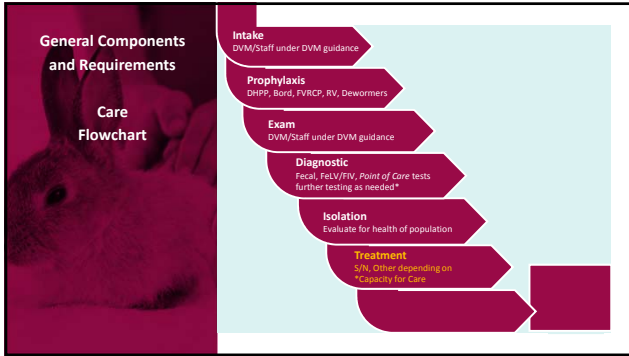


General Components and Requirements

Care Flowchart

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graph TD
    A[Intake  
DVM/Staff under DVM guidance] --> B[Prophylaxis  
DRPP, Bord, FVRCP, RV, Dewormers]
    B --> C[Exam  
DVM/Staff under DVM guidance]
    C --> D[Diagnostic  
Fecal, FELV/FIV, Point of Care tests  
further testing as needed*]
    D --> E[Isolation  
Evaluate for health of population]
  
```



General Components and Requirements
Treatment

Medical Treatment Decision Making

- Veterinarians create treatment plans
- Process in place to decide which treatments can be done (resources, population, mission)
- *Quality of Life* is primary consideration
- Treatments must be carried out per veterinarian's plan
- Cardinal Rule: We must relieve suffering

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General Components and Requirements
Treatment

Treatment


- Dependent on Staff and Volume (unlike private practice)
- Overall needs of the population must be considered
- **Surgical Options**
 - Postop realities – Capacity for Care
 - In shelter, foster
 - Rehab medicine options

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General Components and Requirements

Treatment


- Veterinarian's Orders
- Protocols
 - Should be developed by vets but may be administered by AC staff
- State laws prevail



General Components and Requirements

Treatment

- Medication but also environmental management (e.g. URI in cats – ventilation, manage stress, etc.)
- Use of foster homes
- Prescription meds—under a veterinarian's direct care, or protocol developed by a veterinarian
- Transfers to other organizations



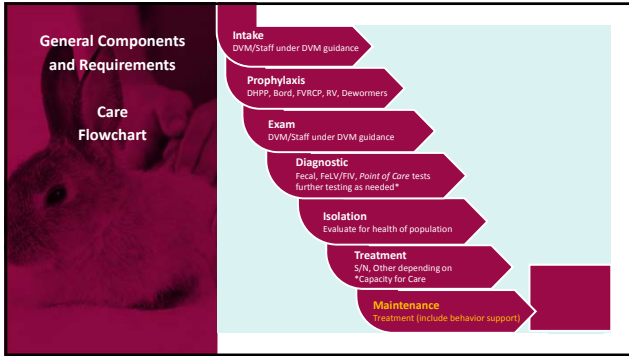
General Components and Requirements

Five Freedoms

Capacity for Care

- **Five Freedoms**
 - Animals must remain comfortable
 - Keep population healthy
- **Capacity for Care**
 - AC staff, hospital staff, volunteers to administer treatments





General Components and Requirements
Ongoing Care

Maintenance

- Capacity for Care again
- Scheduling animal care to minimize *Length of Stay*
- Minimize disease transmission
- Daily Shelter Rounds
 - Cross functional groups - vets, RVTs, AC staff, behavior staff, managers, etc.
- Document rounds
- Monitor
 - Eating, drinking, U/D
 - Health conditions
 - Behavior needs

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General Components and Requirements
Nutrition

Maintenance

- Feeding and nutrition
 - Selection of proper diets
 - Use of prescription diets - under vet supervision
 - Monitoring appetite
 - Monitoring group housing

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General Components and Requirements

Disease Outbreaks

Disease Control

- Daily Monitoring for signs of disease
- Isolation from other animals
 - Capacity for Care
 - Facility
 - Staffing— medical staff in particular
 - Protocols for dealing with contagion
 - Response time for staff to recognizing risk and disease
 - Continuing education and training in isolation and treatment protocols
- If unable to provide appropriate care...transfer, foster, or euthanize
- Balancing individual and population health management

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General Components and Requirements

Infectious Disease Control

Infectious Disease Protocols

- Parvovirus (Canine)
- Distemper (Canine)
- Panleukopenia (Feline)
- Ringworm (Canine and Feline)
- Mange (Canine)
- Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease (Kennel Cough/Influenza)
- Feline Upper Respiratory Infection including Calicivirus (Feline)
- Rabies

Data Collection System

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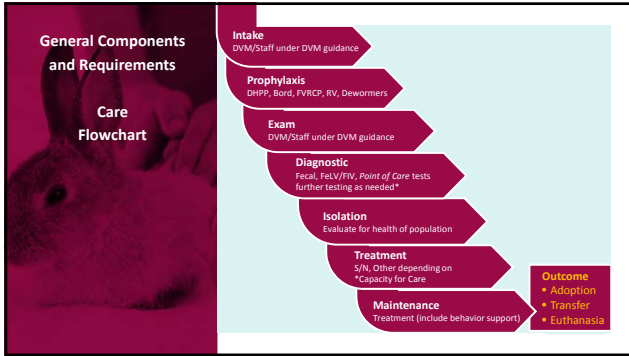
General Components and Requirements

Spay/Neuter

Spay/Neuter

- Must occur prior to release
- Sx's on site or partner with local vets
- Considerations for transfers—written agreement if not s/n before transfer
- In shelter surgery should adhere to ASV Guidelines
- Early age surgery—min. 6 weeks
- Animals too young for surgery— don't adopt— foster an option
- Exemptions – per veterinarian and documented

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General Components and Requirements
Housing

- Minimize disease transmission
- Group Housing – size, behavior, repro status
- Quarantine/Isolation
- Legal Considerations—Rabies, Dangerous, HLE investigations
- Behavior Enrichment Program – Relieve stress (Five Freedoms)

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General Components and Requirements
Outcomes

- Tracking system
- Adoption
 - Condition at time of adoption
 - Medical Disclosure
 - Continuity of Care
- Transfers
- Euthanasia

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Above and Beyond

- Additional surgical procedures
- Forensics training
- Releasing animals with chronic conditions
- Incoming transfers
- Outside assessment of veterinary practices



Attachments

- Humane Society of Boulder Valley Shelter Medicine Journal
- Catalyst Council Standardized Data Collection Summary
- Catalyst Council Data Collection Questionnaire
- Veterinary Care Timeline



Questions?

Download the full document:
<https://www.sawanetwork.org/page/Bestpractice>

