



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 6, 2016

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **Pima Animal Care Center Budget Adjustment and Operating Modification**

As you know, the Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) was recently challenged by a highly infectious disease outbreak. PACC has handled this event in an exemplary manner; however, in handling the outbreak, additional costs directly attributable to the outbreak have been incurred. Therefore, I have authorized an increase in PACC's budget of an additional \$100,000. These funds will be billed to participating jurisdictions in proportion to their usage of PACC's facilities.

In addition, we have implemented a new scheduled admissions process for the public's use in surrendering animals to PACC. This controlled admissions policy was in place during the disease outbreak and has resulted in improved outcomes in customer service response. Therefore, it will be implemented on a permanent basis.

The attached December 2, 2016 memorandum from Deputy County Administrator Jan Leshar discusses in detail the infectious disease outbreak and the associated costs, as well as the improved process for scheduled admissions at PACC.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Health Services
Dr. Francisco Garcia, Director, Health Department

Date: 2 December 2016

To: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

From: Francisco Garcia
Director

Via: Jan Leshner 
Deputy County Administrator

Re: Pima Animal Care Center Budget and Operations Request

Background

The Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) has made significant strides over the past few years to align with national standards and best practices in our efforts to serve Pima County residents and their pets. These achievements are notable since they have occurred in the face of significant challenges posed by outdated and overcrowded facility. While many of the obstacles will be addressed by the new facility, which is under construction, the continuous uninterrupted operation of PACC while construction and related preparatory work progresses on the campus poses unique challenges that we are actively managing.

One such challenge has been the recent outbreak of shelter-related illness that was referenced in the Deputy County Administrator Jan Leshner's memorandum of November 9. Beginning in early November, Dr. Jennifer Wilcox the Chief of Veterinary Services noted that several dogs appeared to become severely ill and quickly succumbed. Through her astute and rapid investigation, we were able to conclude that the etiology for this for this outbreak was distemper virus (distemper) and Streptococcus equi zooepidemicus (Strep zoo). To date we have identified 11 dogs infected with Strep zoo, 20 with distemper, and 2 co-infected with both. Testing is pending on 20 dogs and even minimally symptomatic animals have been isolated from the rest of the shelter population. At this time 48 kennels are being used to house the isolated population.

Following your approval, PACC staff implemented the strategy to: 1) isolate and treat the affected animals; 2) limit voluntary elective owner surrenders; 3) temporarily limit adoptions to only cats (this species is not impacted by this outbreak) and disease free dogs; and 4) thoroughly review our internal operations to identify potential vulnerabilities.

Throughout this process the PACC team has done a tremendous job in evaluating, treating, and controlling this veterinary disease outbreak in a timely and efficient manner, saving hundreds of lives of animals in our care. However, confronting this unexpected disease outbreak has important financial and operational implications for PACC.

Budget Implications

PACC's response to the recent infectious disease threats has been substantial. To date we have incurred costs of approximately \$51,404. The principal cost driver is related to the medical cost associated with our response. Specifically, medications, laboratory services, and medical supplies account for \$30,009. An additional \$12,400 is associated with staff overtime that is necessitated by the segregation of the population and the need to evaluate and medicate a substantial number of animals. The expenditures to date are detailed in the table below.

Expense	Description	Total
Laboratory	Cultures, serology and PCR testing as well as necropsy	\$10,674
Medications	Doxy 20mg & 100mg Simplicef 100mg & 200 mg Cephalexin 250mg & 500 mg Pen G, Stm 960mg	\$18,180
Medical Supplies	Wyshiwash tabs, laboratory supplies, intravenous fluids	\$1,155
Staff Overtime	Two pay periods 11/09-11/28	\$12,400
Boarding healthy animals	Daily boarding charges: \$6,820 PACC staff labor credit: \$1,120	\$5,700
Stray-intake services provided by Humane Society of Southern Az	110 pets admitted to HSSA on behalf of PACC at \$25/pet	\$2,750
Benson Animal Shelter	Provided adoptable animals at a community event for PACC on 11/12	\$545
TOTAL		\$51,404

This is still an active outbreak situation at PACC. As such we anticipate the need to sustain our response for another four (4) weeks. The anticipated expenses for this period of time is estimated at \$48,409 principally to support the medical related costs and staff overtime. PACC staff is actively involved in identifying external resources to help defray some of the expenses associated with this response but these are expected to be modest.

It should be noted that last fiscal year PACC was under budget for the first time since it became a separate budgetary unit. The FY 15-16 adopted budget was \$8,801,390, and as of the last period of FY 15-16, total combined actual expenditures were \$8,703,833. A key factor that ensured PACC's fiscal performance was the aggressive management of overtime expenses and the active monitoring of the budget.

Additionally, FY16-17 has posed some important unexpected challenges that PACC has managed within our existing resources. First, County employees were awarded BOS approved raises. The budget impact for PACC was \$144,412. In addition, the FLSA implementation across the County created an additional expense of \$42,655. In total the budget impact of these two adjustments was \$187,067, which was partially subsidized by a Central Finance allocation \$30,000 to offset these unbudgeted expenses.

The continued ongoing response to the recent outbreak within the context of a fiscal environment that has already absorbed significant unbudgeted expenses makes a short fall at the end of the FY 16-17 budget inevitable without additional financial support and resources. *For that reason, PACC requests supplemental funding to our budget in the amount of \$99,813.*

Scheduled Admissions

PACC is an open admission shelter. As such we never turn a pet away in need. In most cases PACC is able to accommodate even large influxes of pets, honoring the commitment to “save the saveable”. Historically, however, this has left the shelter with up to 1,000 or more pets being cared for in a building that was built to accommodate approximately 450 pets. Such situations will become less frequent as we move into a modern more efficient facility, as we reap the dividends of the County’s long-term investment in low-cost spay and neuter programs, and as we continue to support successful pet ownership in our community.

As part of our internal operational process review, 14 days ago PACC had an on-site consultation performed by Dr. Cynthia Karsten, Shelter Veterinarian from UC Davis, Koret Shelter Medicine Program. She provided useful feedback and generally provided positive reinforcement of the actions we have taken in response to this outbreak. At that time, she expressed concern about systemic overcrowding and the need to make programmatic changes to operate at a level that optimizes the outcomes of the pets that are in our care. She specifically recommended that PACC develop an “intake program that supports the shelter’s capacity for care by aligning intake type and timing with the shelter’s resources to provide the best welfare and outcome for every animal admitted”.

By scheduling intake appointments for healthy, owned pets, PACC and the community benefit in the following ways:

- Owners receive valuable resources and counseling over the phone before they come in to relinquish their pet, often providing them the tools they need to keep their pet in their home.
- Owners are able to schedule a time that is convenient for them to come to PACC and wait times are significantly decreased due to the enhanced efficiencies scheduled admissions provides.
- Appointments provide a more comfortable low-stress experience, significantly reducing wait times and allowing for more interaction between the PACC staff and the pet owner.
- Controlling the flow of incoming pets allows for management of the pet population by decreasing the need for housing capacity, decreasing foot traffic, and targeting adoptions.

- Maintaining a pet population within PACC's capacity for care allows for improved disease control, a less stressful environment for pets, and a lower likelihood of co-housing pets all of which are associated with a reduced average length of stay which will provide a savings to the County and its jurisdictional partners.

Managed intake refers to the scheduling of voluntary elective owner surrenders, by limiting the hours for intake, providing scheduled appointments, and providing alternatives to pet owners seeking out these services. This strategy is a best-practice nationally and has been responsible for decreased shelter intake, crowding, costs, and in some cases dramatic reductions in euthanasia. Any animal that is not a hazard or subject to undue risk can be admitted as part of a managed intake program. We have effectively piloted this managed intake/scheduled owner surrender approach as part of our response to the current outbreak situation in an effort to prevent the exposure of healthy pets and the dissemination of this outbreak into the community.

From November 9 to the 11th, we limited our intake to mandatory surrenders. This included the temporary suspension of elective owner surrender. To fill constituent needs we have expanded the PACC Pet Support Center (PSC) effort. This is a telephone bank that provides pet owners advice on how resolving challenging pet issues, provides alternatives to surrendering pets to the shelter, and offers referrals to other useful services that increase pet retention. During this period, PSC handled approximately 1500 calls per week. With the assistance and support of our staff and partners, the vast majority of callers were able to hold on to their pet or were willing to try to find alternative placement for their pet. To be clear pets in distress or strays brought in by good Samaritans continue to be served without appointment during our hours of operation.

We propose to continue scheduled intake of voluntary elective surrenders of animals during the period of construction. In the meantime, resources such as PSC and the Diversion Help Desk, will assist citizens in the resolution of common issues, including sources for low-cost spay/neuter and other medical services including food, behavioral training information, and web-based posting sites to help finders reunite lost pets with owners and help owners rehome pets safely on their own.

Request

PACC staff and volunteers have provided a robust, evidence-based, aggressive response to the challenge posed by the current outbreak which has had the net lifesaving impact for the dogs that are in our care and custody. We anticipate that this emergent issue will be resolved in the next four weeks. In order to prevent the continued spread of disease and address an anticipated budget shortfall we request a supplementary budget allocation of \$99,813. Additionally, we request permission to continue scheduled voluntary elective owner surrenders of animals into our facility for the duration of the construction period. We are confident with your approval of these two requests, PACC will be able to meet the needs of our community in a fiscally responsible fashion.

Supplemental Budget Request of \$99,813

✓

Approve
C. Huckelberry

Not Approved
12/5/16

C. H. Huckelberry

Date

reover costs through each jurisdiction fair share of expense

Scheduled Intake Operational Procedures

✓

Approve
C. Huckelberry

Not Approved
12/5/16

C. H. Huckelberry

Date