



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 9, 2016

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Pima Animal Care Center**

In response to a recent outbreak of shelter-related illness, Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) staff have requested, and I have approved, a plan that immediately halts the elective surrender of all animals to PACC for a period of two weeks.

The attached memorandum describes the illness that has resulted in this recommendation and the plan to communicate with our many partners and the public.

CHH/mjk

Attachment

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



MEMORANDUM

Community and Health Services

Date: November 9, 2016

To: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

From: Jan Lesker 
Deputy County Administrator

Re: Pima Animal Care Center

In response to a recent outbreak of shelter-related illness, I am asking that Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) be allowed to halt the elective surrender of all animals to the Center for approximately two weeks, starting today, November 9 and halt adoptions for a few, as yet undetermined number of, days. Shelter-related illness can be deadly if not quickly treated and this will allow us to take the necessary steps to protect the health of the public and the animals served.

The shelter's mandated functions, including law enforcement, cruelty and neglect cases and rabies quarantine will continue as normal.

It is important to note that other shelters when faced with a similar outbreak have chosen to euthanize animals. We believe that the course of action proposed is that of a humane shelter, consistent with the policy direction of the Board of Supervisors and PACC.

Background

On Thursday, November 3, a dog succumbed dramatically to a fulminant hemorrhagic process that made Dr. Wilcox suspect an infectious process. That night all animals were evaluated by Dr. Wilcox and the veterinary team. All sick animals were isolated from the general population and tested.

Dr. Wilcox sent PRC panels, which is a respiratory test that's test pathogens (Canine Distemper virus or distemper, Streptococcus equi zooepidemicus or strep zoo) and many other illnesses, for 24 animals to IDEXX, a national diagnostic laboratory. The results of the tests found that eight dogs were positive for distemper, six were positive for strep zoo and one was positive for both strep zoo and distemper. Of the eight dogs that tested positive for distemper, four died or were humanely euthanized. All other dogs have responded well to treatment.

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Beginning November 3, all asymptomatic/well animals were treated with antibiotics prophylactically. Effective November 4, all new intakes to the shelter also received prophylactic antibiotic therapy. In addition, all animals that were adopted were sent home with a prescription for antibiotics on a preventive basis.

Because the infected dogs come from all areas of the shelter we have to consider the exposure widespread; and therefore consider all of our dogs as potentially exposed. Both distemper and strep zoo are highly infectious and potentially fatal. This is the first detection of strep zoo in any Tucson shelter; we are fortunate that there has been a limited mortality rate.

Recommendation

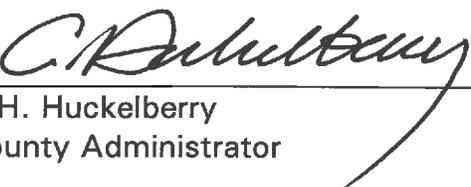
I am recommending that PACC cancel upcoming offsite adoption events and dog walks and cease elective incoming and outgoing animals starting today, November 9 for a period of two weeks. While these diseases impact only canines, limiting the intake of animals will limit unnecessary shelter traffic and allow PACC to resolve this situation quickly. It will also allow for the deep cleaning of the facility and the movement of animals within the facility based on an assessment of each animal's immune system and vulnerability. During this two-week period, staff will finish the recommended ten (10) days of prophylactic antibiotics for all dogs housed at the shelter at the time of the outbreak and continue testing for diseases.

Upon your approval, we will begin communication with PACC Partners, representing our partner jurisdictions, PACC Advisory Committee, PACC volunteers, the media and the general public. A press release will be sent, information will be provided through the website, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and a press conference tentatively scheduled for 11 a.m. today.

JL/cbc

c: Dr. Francisco Garcia, Director, Health Department

Approved Not Approved


C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator


Date