

Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Animal Welfare
Spay and Neuter Program
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DELAWARE SPAY & NEUTER PROGRAM

PERFORMANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS

*Recommendations by the Delaware Spay and Neuter Program Performance
Review Committee*

Date Issued: April 28, 2016

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PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

STATE SPAY AND NEUTER PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT

The State Spay and Neuter Program (SNP) was first established in 2006 by the Delaware General Assembly. The overarching goal of the program was to curb pet homelessness and decrease the number of healthy dogs and cats euthanized in Delaware animal shelters, while increasing public safety and health. The SNP provides low-cost spay and neuter services to residents receiving qualifying public assistance and grants to non-profit organizations that rescue and/or provide sterilization services to homeless animals in the state. The program is funded through a rabies surcharge and copays paid by participants in the program.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health Office of Animal Welfare administers the SNP and is responsible for:

- Distributing, collecting and compiling all forms, including but not limited to, veterinarian participation agreements, and sterilization and immunization certifications; and
- Maintaining a list of participating veterinarians and determining animal keeper/owner eligibility; and
- Managing the Program's budget, revenue, and costs; and
- Adopting regulations as needed for the administration of the program; and
- Collecting and reporting standardized data concerning shelter intake, euthanasia, and program utilization; and
- Enforcing the State Spay and Neuter Law.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The State Spay and Neuter Law established a committee of animal welfare, veterinary, public health, and social service experts to assess the overall performance of the SNP and make recommendations on the performance to the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). The committee, named the Spay/Neuter Performance Review Committee (PRC) meets as often as

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necessary to develop these recommendations to ensure the program is meeting performance goals and delivers results over time.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following are members of the Performance Review Committee:

- Hetti Brown, Chair (appointed by the Secretary of the DHSS)
- Paula Eggers, Division of Public Health
- Melissa Worthy, Division of Social Services
- Dr. Michelle Crosier, Delaware Veterinary Medical Association
- Tiffany Briddell, Delaware Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Patrick Carroll, Delaware Humane Association
- Kevin Usilton, First State Animal Center-SPCA
- Jane Pierantozzi, Faithful Friends Animal Society
- Kathleen Gallagher, New Castle County Rescue Representative
- Dr. Sheri Wood, New Castle County Veterinary Representative
- Dr. Stacy Waters, Kent County Veterinary Representative
- Kristen Mondeaux, Kent County Rescue Representative
- Kristi Idnurm, Sussex County Rescue Representative
- Dr. Mike Metzler, Sussex County Veterinary Representative

PURPOSE

This document outlines new recommendations for the performance of the SNP for the next three-year period.

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Performance Review

PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SNP

While considering a law establishing the SNP, the Delaware General Assembly reviewed statistics concerning homeless animal populations. The statistics below represent the time period prior to the establishment of the SNP and therefore, serves as a baseline.

During 2002, of the 22,165 dogs and cats which were received at Delaware's primary animal facilities:

- Two thousand four hundred and nine (11%) were returned to their owners/guardians;
- Seven thousand two hundred and ninety (33%) were adopted; and
- Twelve thousand six hundred and fifty-nine (57%) were euthanized.

During 2003, of the 24,510 dogs and cats which were received at Delaware's primary animal facilities:

- Two thousand one hundred and eighty-six animals (9%) were returned to their owners/guardians;
- Seven thousand one hundred and twenty-five animals (29%) were adopted; and
- Thirteen thousand six hundred and fifty-three animals (56%) were euthanized.

During 2004, of the 21,254 dogs and cats which were received at Delaware's primary animal facilities:

- Two thousand one hundred and ninety-three animals (10.3%) were returned to their owners/guardians;
- Five thousand five hundred animals (25.8%) were adopted; and
- Thirteen thousand and sixty-seven animals (61.4%) were euthanized.

During 2005, of the 21,062 dogs and cats which were received at Delaware's primary animal facilities:

- Two thousand two hundred and ninety-nine animals (10.9%) were returned to their owners/guardians;
- Five thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven animals (27.7%) were adopted; and
- Thirteen thousand five hundred and eighty three animals (64.4%) were euthanized.

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PROGRAM PERFORMANCE, 2006 - 2015

Once the SNP was established and operational, the number of animals taken into shelters and euthanized started to decrease, while sterilization surgeries and rabies vaccinations increased.

TABLE 1: DOG AND CAT INTAKE AND EUTHANASIA RATES

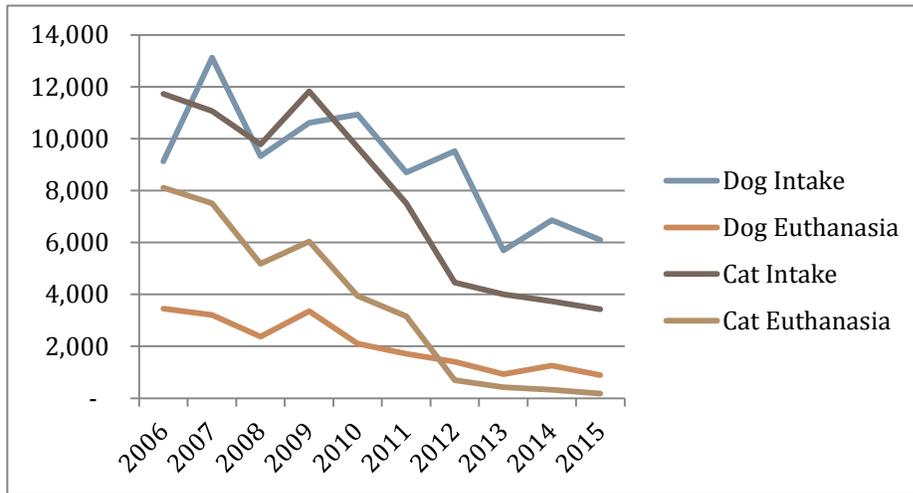
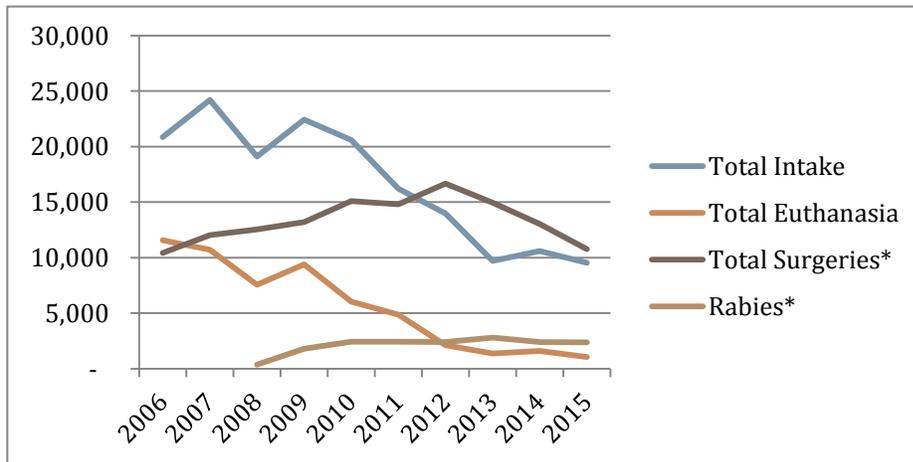


TABLE 2: TOTAL INTAKE, EUTHANASIA, AND SURGERIES EACH YEAR OF SNP



The decline in the number of surgeries delivered from 2012 to 2015 was in large part due to a decline in the availability of high-volume non-profit clinics.

* Invoices received for surgeries and rabies inoculations received after March 31, 2016 have not been included and therefore, data for 2015 is incomplete.

While many efforts have contributed to the decrease in shelter intake and euthanasia rates in the state, the SNP has significantly contributed to this success by increasing access to low-cost sterilization for more than 9,000 Delawareans and 21,061 animals since program inception.

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Recent Accomplishments

YEAR 2014 – 2015 SNP ACHIEVEMENTS

In July, 2014, management of the SNP transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Health and Social Services. At this time, the PRC was also re-established per Delaware Code under the Department of Health and Social Services. Since this transfer, there have been several significant achievements, including:

- Launch of a reformed non-profit quarterly allocation process to increase return-on-investment and improve access to funds by organizations doing the most to facilitate surgeries;
- Development of a statewide marketing campaign, *Fixed and Fabulous*, with a targeted outreach to persons who qualify for the SNP;
- Launch of an online application and new web site to increase resident accessibility and ease-of-use;
- Initiation of point-of-service payment process to remove unnecessary barriers to the program and increase the number of easy payment options for participants;
- Successful recruitment of new veterinary partners and 501c3 organizations to help facilitate surgeries;
- Establishment of defined performance goals to ensure the program meets current and future needs of the community.

The actions above have produced significant results, including more than 200% increase in the number of applications received and processed from income-eligible residents, a 25% increase in the number of veterinary clinics/hospitals participating in the SNP, and an increase in the number of surgery certificates issued to, and used by, non-profit shelter and rescue organizations to facilitate surgeries.

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Spay and Neuter Program Performance Goals

PERFORMANCE GOALS

The PRC has adopted the following as performance goals for the SNP:

- Increase number of surgeries completed through the program year-over-year as funding allows.
- Engage more veterinary partners to provide service through the program.
- Increase community awareness about the program.
- Identify high-risk populations of animals and target those populations.
- Identify new sources of funding to support goals.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Each performance goal will be measured with data and information collected by the SNP Administrator. This includes:

- Number of surgeries completed by the program as compared to previous years
- Number of veterinary partners engaged in the program as compared to previous years
- Distribution of veterinary providers and available services to cover targeted areas
- Number of qualified applications received by the program administrator each year as compared to previous years
- Number of qualified applications received by the program administrator for large-breed dogs and cats as compared to previous years
- Shelter intake and euthanasia statistics
- Diversity of revenue sourcing and rabies vaccination surcharge compliance

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Recommendations

It is the recommendation of the PRC that the following actions be taken by the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health Office of Animal Welfare to ensure long-term success of the state Spay and Neuter Program.

- Develop a more comprehensive database to track program utilization, fund distribution, and performance;
- Collaborate with State Service Centers and other offices within the Division of Public Health and Division of Social Services to promote the SNP with targeted populations;
- Define policies and procedures to increase compliance with rabies surcharge submission requirements;
- Build the value proposition for veterinarians participating in the program and develop recruitment materials to use with veterinary practice managers and veterinarians;
- Leverage relationship with the Delaware Veterinary Medical Association to identify opportunities to engage the veterinary community;
- Utilize special promotions to bring targeted animal populations (large-breed dogs and cats) into the program;
- Continue to develop and promote educational initiatives for the general public concerning the importance and health benefits of pet sterilization;
- Recruit 501c3 partners that specialize in large-breed dog rescue and trap-neuter-vaccinate-return programs;
- Consider increasing the number of animals that can be serviced per income-eligible applicant per year;
- Consider expanding the types of qualifying benefit programs for income-eligible applicants;
- Continue to manage the program in a fiscally responsible manner and ensure all funds are being allocated according to the greatest need. Identify areas of waste and opportunities to make funds last longer and do more; and
- Track emerging community trends and spay/neuter needs to inform future recommendations.

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Next Steps

The PRC will review program performance against the goals listed in this document at least annually, and will receive regular feedback from the Office of Animal Welfare concerning the delivery of recommendations provided within. The PRC will specifically review program performance against each defined measure to ensure the program is on track to accomplish each goal within three years from the publication of this report.

The PRC will review recommendations annually and make revisions as needed and according to program performance, administration needs or challenges, and emerging issues within the community. If changes are required, the PRC will submit an addendum to the Department upon a confirmation vote by committee members.

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