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San Diego Humane Society Asks Community for Help to Protect Shelter Pets Amid Spread of Pneumonia

San Diego, CA – In response to an outbreak of pneumonia affecting dogs at San Diego Humane Society (SDHS) shelters, the organization is asking the community for help to reduce the population of dogs in the shelter. Overcrowding increases the risk of disease, and the organization is averaging a record of nearly 800 dogs in care per day during the month of August.

Pneumonia in dogs is a condition that affects the respiratory system, including the lungs and airways, and can make it difficult for dogs to breathe. It can be caused by viral and bacterial infections, such as mycoplasma, Bordetella, adenovirus, and canine distemper virus, which damage the airways and make dogs more susceptible to pneumonia. Some strains of pneumonia, like kennel cough, can also be contagious to other dogs.

Dogs have increased susceptibility to disease in the shelter, where they are housed closely together and experiencing stressors associated with shelter environments. For owned dogs outside the shelter, pneumonia presents a significantly lower risk and is commonly treatable with antibiotics. “While dogs in the general population are at low risk, pet parents should keep their dogs up to date on Bordetella and Parainfluenza vaccines,” said Dr. Zarah Hedge, San Diego Humane Society Chief Medical Officer. “We have ensured that our canine population is up to date on their vaccines to mitigate the spread and limit infection, but we need the public’s help in stopping the flow of dogs that come through our doors every day.”

Due to overcrowding and to prevent the spread of disease, San Diego Humane Society is pausing owner surrenders of dogs Sept. 3-17, 2024. To schedule a future appointment, please call 619-299-7012. The organization is also encouraging pet owners who are faced with the difficult decision to rehome their pets to do so on their own, by using the resources at sdhumane.org/rehome and avoid bringing pets to the shelter.

How the Public Can Help:

San Diego Humane Society is pleading with the community to help them reduce the number of animals in their care to create space in their shelters, reduce the risk of disease and safeguard the health of the pets in their care. We are asking our community to:

Adopt: By adopting a dog from the shelter, you can play a vital role in reducing overcrowding and helping to prevent the spread of disease. San Diego Humane Society is reducing all adoption fees by 50% during “Clear the Shelters” month now through Sept. 10, 2024. The organization will also waive all adoption fees on Sept. 7 for a special “Clear the Shelters” day. Plus, every pet adopted from a shelter or rescue has been microchipped, vaccinated and spayed or neutered — services that can easily cost a pet family over \$1,000. And San Diego Humane Society also offers an adoption guarantee, meaning you are welcome to return the animal to their care if it’s not the right match for you or the animal.

San Diego Humane Society is open for walk-in adoptions Tuesday through Sunday at its campuses in Escondido, El Cajon, Oceanside and San Diego. **Adoptions take place from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday & 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday. All available pets can be seen at sdhumane.org/adopt.**

Hold on to Stray Pets: To prevent the spread of disease, San Diego Humane Society is urging everyone to help keep dogs out of the shelter. Finders of lost animals are strongly encouraged to participate in their [Wait 48 or](#)



StrayCare programs, which allow community members to care for stray pets in their homes while we actively work to find their owner. Through the Wait 48 program, you can keep a lost pet in your home for a few days while seeking the pet's owner. In many cases, animals reunite with their families without ever needing to enter a shelter! Through the StrayCare Program, you can keep a lost pet in your home during their legally required 72-hour stray hold period while we seek their owner. If the owner can't be found, you can choose to adopt, continue fostering or return the pet to the shelter at a prescheduled appointment time.

Foster: This is a critical – and temporary – way you can make an immediate impact and help save lives. By opening your home to foster a pet, you give them relief from the stress of the shelter and create desperately needed space for other animals in need. Visit sdhumane.org/foster to sign up to become a foster.

Donate: Make a gift to help care for the 1,883 pets who are at SDHS shelters right now and counting on them for a second chance. With a disease outbreak, there is increased cost of care to protect each animal. Visit sdhumane.org/donate to contribute.

Spay and neuter: Increasing the number of spayed/neutered animals is the only way to stop the crisis of pet overpopulation at its root. Reduced access to spay/neuter services during the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges facing our shelters. Visit sdhumane.org/spay for low-cost resources.

Photos/b-roll of dogs at San Diego Humane Society for media use can be downloaded here:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/tbIKpHe9vT>

Photo/video credit: San Diego Humane Society

About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.

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