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San Diego Humane Society Sees Increase in Canine Respiratory Disease, Causing Temporary Suspension of Dog Surrender Services

SAN DIEGO — Recently, San Diego Humane Society reported an increase in canine respiratory symptoms among the dogs in the shelter's care. Testing has confirmed that this condition is canine pneumovirus.

In accordance with appropriate disease management protocols, all affected dogs have been placed under quarantine and San Diego Humane Society is temporarily limiting dog intake to stray animals until further notice. The shelter is currently unable to take in owner-surrendered dogs at any campus location (San Diego, El Cajon, Escondido and Oceanside), except in cases of emergency that threaten the health of the pet.

"Canine pneumovirus is a relatively new virus, and causes symptoms such as coughing, sneezing and nasal discharge. While most affected animals experience minor cold-like symptoms, a small number of dogs may develop pneumonia," said Dr. Zarah Hedge, Chief Medical Officer and VP of Shelter Medicine for San Diego Humane Society. "This virus often spreads through kennels because of the high number of dogs in one location. In a shelter setting, it's critical that we quarantine sick dogs for 14 days so they can rest, recover and we can prevent spread of the virus to the rest of the shelter population or the community. In order to preserve space, we are asking for the public's support to limit the number of dogs being brought to our shelters."

Although owner-surrendered dogs cannot be accepted at this time, San Diego Humane Society offers alternatives to help community members who are unable to keep their dogs. The organization's website has a wide range of [tools and resources](#) to help people hold onto their dogs a little longer, or adopt their dogs directly into new families, including:

- [Rehoming resources](#), which help owners find new homes for pets online, rather than taking them to a shelter.
- A [Community Pet Pantry](#) that offers free pet food and supplies to pet owners in need.
- Housing and eviction resources to help pet owners [find housing in San Diego County](#).
- [Behavior and training tools and services](#).

San Diego Humane Society President and CEO Gary Weitzman called on San Diegans for assistance during this outbreak. "This is a challenging situation occurring during the busiest time of the year. We are working to resolve this as quickly as possible, and we sincerely appreciate our community's understanding and support. This relatively new virus is already present in the community. Most dogs will develop only mild symptoms but if you notice cold-like symptoms in your dog at home, schedule an appointment with your veterinarian to evaluate your dog and recommend an appropriate course of treatment."

About Canine Pneumovirus:

Canine pneumovirus is a relatively new and emerging virus that causes symptoms similar to other canine respiratory viruses (including coughing, sneezing and nasal discharge). A small subset of dogs affected with this condition may develop pneumonia, which can be serious. There is no vaccine, so most dogs do not have immunity to this virus. The incubation period for canine pneumovirus is 3-5 days. Dogs affected by canine pneumovirus are typically placed under quarantine for 7-14 days.

Suggested Tweet: Due to increase in canine pneumovirus, @sdhumane is temporarily suspending dog surrender services to quarantine affected dogs. Alternative resources can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3OjrOwh>

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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