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Severe Canine Respiratory Disease at San Diego Humane Society

Due to highly contagious illness, dog owner surrender services on hold through Dec. 1, 2023 and organization needs adopters or fosters for at least 100 dogs

SAN DIEGO — San Diego Humane Society (SDHS) is temporarily pausing owner surrenders of dogs, except in emergencies that threaten the health of the pet, due to occurrences of a respiratory disease called *Streptococcus Equi* subspecies *Zooepidemicus* (also known as *Strep zoo*) and a bacterial infection called Mycoplasma. The two in combination have led to more severe disease than what the shelter might see with just one of these pathogens.

Because the shelter is already operating over capacity, and to prevent the spread of disease, the organization is:

- ❑ **Limiting its dog intake to stray animals through Dec. 1, 2023.**
- ❑ **Requesting that all relinquishments of other species be made by appointment only.**
- ❑ **Waiving reclaim fees for anyone picking up their lost dog through Dec. 1, 2023.**
- ❑ **[Waiving adoption fees](#) for all puppies and dogs through Dec. 1, 2023.**
- ❑ **Pleading with the community to temporarily [foster a dog](#) in hopes of getting at least 100 dogs out of the shelter as soon as possible.**

Three dogs have died from *Strep zoo* at the organization's San Diego Campus. *Strep zoo* is a bacteria that is primarily spread through direct contact and fomites. To prevent the spread of the disease, all 77 dogs who have tested positive or been exposed to *Strep zoo* are being treated, and staff working with the dogs are required to wear personal protective equipment.

San Diego Humane Society is currently operating at 178% capacity for dogs and 116% capacity for cats and continues to be flooded with animals in need. "Any shelter that cares for the large number of animals we care for is used to managing infectious disease. But this is the first time we have had this highly virulent pathogen," said Dr. Gary Weitzman, President and CEO at San Diego Humane Society. "We believe this is a direct result of having to operate over capacity this entire year. We really need the community's help to save lives here."

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 the organization actively works to find their owner. In many cases, animals reunite with their families without ever needing to enter a shelter! Through the Wait 48 program, you can keep a lost pet in your home for a few days while seeking the pet's owner. 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.

For updates on *Strep zoo* at San Diego Humane Society, visit sdhumane.org/strepzoo.

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, visit sdhumane.org.