Preserving the Human-Animal Bond and Preventing Neglect by Facilitating Access to Care

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29TH ANNUAL ANIMAL LAW CONFERENCE
TRANSFORMING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMALS
Acknowledgments and Disclaimers

Acknowledgments:
Thank you to the Animal Law Conference Planning Committee for this opportunity. Thank you to the Oregon Humane Society for photos and case studies used in this presentation (unless otherwise indicated).

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This presentation contains graphic images of animals who have ongoing medical issues in need of veterinary care.

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Human-Animal Bond

Humans and animals have shared social relationships since recorded history.

The bond exists regardless of socioeconomic constructs.
Human-Animal Bond

Animals are comforting and steadfast companions when humans are faced with loss of income, illness, relationship breakdowns, and other life challenges.

PHOTO CREDIT: TASHA GIACOMAZZI
What Breaks the Bond?

“Unable to afford care” is one of the top reasons companion animals are surrendered to shelters.
How Neglect is Born Out of Poverty

- Households living paycheck to paycheck
- One-time, wrong time emergencies
- Chronic lack of medical and preventative care
## Example Work Up: Bad Skin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Exam</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloodwork</td>
<td>$225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin Scrape/Analyze</td>
<td>$80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flea Control</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ears Clean and Flush</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antibiotics</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicated Shampoo</td>
<td>$27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription Diet</td>
<td>$90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ear Ointment</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allergy Medication</td>
<td>$90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** $757  
**Plus** $180 monthly
# Example Work Up: Dental Disease

* $60 – Oral Exam  
* $225 – Blood Chemistry Panel  
* $150-200 – Radiographs  
* $600-1,200 – Anesthesia, Cleaning, Extractions

**Total** $1,036-1,735
Example Work Up: Emergency Pyometra

- $165 – Emergency Exam
- $120 – X-Rays
- $225 – Presurgical Blood Chemistry
- $700 – Emergency Surgery
- $300 – Hospitalization
- $100 – Oral Medication

Total $1,610
Example Work Up: Large Animal

$60 – Farm call
$70 – Exam
$160 – Bloodwork
$25 – Fecal
$315 – TOTAL
Neglect Laws in the U.S.

- 21 states specifically reference “veterinary” or “medical” care in their neglect statute(s)
- 6 states include maintaining “health” and/or “well-being” of the animal
- 3 states include language indicating veterinary care, such as “prevent unnecessary suffering” and “other essential care”
Enforcement of Neglect Laws

- Criminal Citation
- Fines and costs associated with trial
- Removal of animals
- Possession Bans
Different Types of Neglect Cases

- Intentional, malicious neglect
- Knowingly committing neglect
A Lesson Learned

How our time and experiences working in humane law enforcement changed our way of thinking in these cases.

- Worked at a shelter with a law enforcement division and community programs
- Overlap and interconnectedness
- When to choose one path over another

Intentional, malicious neglect

Knowingly committing neglect

Monitoring and compliance resolve issue(s)

Resources and education resolve issue(s)
Case Study
Case Study
Overcoming Barriers to Care:
Cascade effect and increasing the capacity for care

- Service deserts
- Capacity for care
- Inefficient practices
- One-time, wrong time
- Gold Standard mentality

“The concept of ‘gold standard’ care can become corrosive when used as a synonym for ‘care’ where every possible avenue of exploration is followed.” - Stavinski
What can communities do?

- Community approach
- Spay/Neuter Programs
- Food banks
- Low cost or subsidized
- Animal control as community resource
- Non-animal organizations
Snowball’s Case: Access to Services
Snowball’s Case: Access to Services
Bubba’s Case: Community Caretaking by Law Enforcement
Bubba’s Case: Community Caretaking by Law Enforcement
How and where should communities begin?

By rethinking traditional enforcement of laws and gold standard veterinary care
Animal Protection Includes Prevention

Animals deserve a community that will actively work towards preventing their victimization.

- Can eliminate the occurrence of criminal neglect in many cases
- Does not replace enforcement of the law when criminal neglect is found
- Every case has unique factors
Thank you!

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