

Attachment 4: Letter to the Veterinarians

March 6, 2008

Dear Colleague,

The Dane County Humane Society is in the process of making an application to Maddie's Fund, a pet rescue foundation, to help bring Dane County to an adoption guarantee for all healthy and treatable shelter dogs and cats. This will be a community-wide effort, which will involve the shelter, rescues, local veterinarians and animal care specialists working together to help address the homelessness of animals in our County.

An important part of this effort will be to help the shelter better define the health status of animals by developing a Pet Evaluation Matrix using a community-wide standard. We intend to categorize animals according to what is appropriate for **owned pets**, not for shelter pets. For example, most would probably agree that heartworm infection is usually a treatable disease in dogs, other diseases, such as parvo and FeLV, will be more controversial. Our definitions are lifted from the Asilomar Accords and we would ask you to use the attached definitions when categorizing each health condition.

This survey is not a perfect document as it is too simplistic to make black and white categories for health conditions. For example, a single kind of disease might be treatable or manageable in one animal, but more severe and untreatable in another animal. For the purpose of developing categories, please think of the "typical" disease presentation. This becomes trickier with behavioral issues, since there are many manifestations from mild to severe.

Most importantly, do not think about these diseases in terms of what a shelter or rescue group can offer as treatment. We want you to answer the questions according to how the animal would do if "given medical, foster, behavioral, or other care, including long-term care, equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring owners/guardians in the community." In other words, the kind of care your typical client will follow through on with regard to your recommendations.

Please take a few minutes to check the appropriate category for each disease in the attached spreadsheet. It would be most helpful if you would return your marked list to me within 2 weeks. We will compile the replies and present them as a starting point for discussion on defining the health status of shelter animals for this community collaborative initiative.

Sincerely,



Asilomar Accords Definitions

The Pet Rescue Foundation

Healthy: The term "healthy" means and includes all dogs and cats eight weeks of age or older that, at or subsequent to the time the animal is taken into possession, have manifested no sign of a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury, a congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the health of the animal or that is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future.

Treatable: The term "treatable" means and includes all dogs and cats who are "rehabilitatable" and all dogs and cats who are "manageable."

Treatable – Rehabilitatable: The term "rehabilitatable" means and includes all dogs and cats who are not "healthy," but who are likely to become "healthy," if given medical, foster, behavioral, or other care equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community.

Treatable – Manageable: The term "manageable" means and includes all dogs and cats who are not "healthy" and who are not likely to become "healthy," regardless of the care provided; but who would likely maintain a satisfactory quality of life, if given medical, foster, behavioral, or other care, including long-term care, equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring owners/guardians in the community; provided, however, that the term "manageable" does not include any dog or cat who is determined to pose a significant risk to human health or safety or to the health or safety of other animals.

Unhealthy & Untreatable: The term "unhealthy and untreatable" means and includes all dogs and cats who, at or subsequent to the time they are taken into possession,
(1) have a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that poses a health or safety risk or otherwise makes the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and are not likely to become "healthy" or "treatable" even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community; or
(2) are suffering from a disease, injury, or congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the animal's health or is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future, and are not likely to become "healthy" or "treatable" even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community; or
(3) are under the age of eight weeks and are not likely to become "healthy" or "treatable," even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community.