Myth: Life saving strategies lead to warehousing of animals which leads to unhealthy animals

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Warehouse

According to Webster . . .

- storehouse for goods or merchandise
Warehousing

According to Webster

- To set aside or accumulate, as for future use
- To confine or house in conditions suggestive of a warehouse
- Informal definition: to confine (e.g., the mentally ill) to large institutions for long-term custodial care
What is the basis for the myth?

If intake exceeds outflow, the options are:
- restrict intake
- good foster care network
- effective adoption program
- transfer programs
- enhanced RTO efforts
- [euthanasia]
My concern as a veterinarian

Failure to follow these strategies can lead to

- Overcrowding
- Lengthy stays

Leading to . . .

- Sick animals
- Deteriorating behavior
- Poor welfare
Length of stay and health

- Increasing lengths of stay
  - Increase the risk of exposure to infx agents
  - Tie up needed cage space
  - Increase the risk of deleterious behaviors
Probability of URTD by Time in Shelter

All Cats

Days in Shelter

Probability of URTD
Capacity is a function of space and staffing requirements.

- Intake exceeds outflow
- Animals accumulate, adherence to protocols declines
- Disease rates rise
- Isolation facilities are overwhelmed
- Length of stay increases
Five keys to avoiding these problems

- Good shelter management
- Make health of the animals a high priority
- Goal-driven health program
- Efficient flow-through of animals
- Disease surveillance / monitoring system
Keys to avoiding these problems

- Good overall management of the shelter
  - Good leadership
  - Staff and volunteer training programs
  - Clear responsibilities
  - Accountability and rewards
  - People management that leads to good morale
  - Other management techniques
Health of the animals must be a high priority

How is health made a priority issue?

- Appointment and regular meetings of a health committee
- State of the art, written protocols
- Identification and empowerment of an “infection control” staff member
  - Job is to oversee the implementation of health-related protocols and monitor the effects
- Clear channels of communication to the shelter manager / Executive Director
Health of the animals must be a high priority

How is health made a priority issue?

- Staff and volunteer training
- Develop a goal-driven health program
  E.g., reduce the number of sick cats by 5% next year.
- Regular feedback to staff/volunteers
Goal-driven health program

- Health related goals established on a regular basis
- Reviewed regularly
- Progress reports back to the volunteers and staff
Efficient flow-through of animals

Regular assessment of the flow of animals

- Identify the potential bottlenecks
  
  E.g., monitor time to examination and vaccination, time to neutering, too many sick animals

- Innovative, productive adoption program
- Daily assessment of progress of each animal
Disease surveillance / monitoring program

- Need to monitor how the population is doing
  - Disease increasing / decreasing?
  - Disease manifestations changing?
- Time to cure
- Other measures
Many other essential practices

For example:

- Vaccinate all animals on entry
  - Only exception are the very young or very sick
- Isolate animals with signs of infectious disease
  - TRULY isolate!!!
- Stress reducing strategies
- Intelligent traffic flow of people and animals
Take questions after Bonney’s presentation