



More than Medicine – The Veterinarian's Role in Daily Rounds (Part 1)

Video Transcript

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Dr. Brian DiGangi: Good morning, everybody. Thanks for coming back today. As Dr. Levy said, I'm going to start out by giving you an overview of what daily rounds is, sort of from the academic standpoint, why we recommend doing daily rounds, and exactly what that entails. And then we will have Dr. Jacks come up. She is a real life Shelter veterinarian. So she will be able to tell you how does that work in practice a little bit better than I may be able to.

So before I start, I would also like to thank PetSmart Charities for sponsoring this session. They do a lot for us at the University of Florida as well as for Shelter Medicine in general. So we are grateful for their support today.

All right. So a couple of objectives for this presentation. As I said, we want to understand the role of daily rounds in a proactive population management plan. And that's the key word. You will see that come up a few times during my slides. This is really a proactive thing. Animal control organizations, animal sheltering organizations traditionally are very reactive. So we want to try to change that so that we can save more

lives, and the way to do that is by being proactive in the way that we manage the animals in our care. What we're going to do is tell you how to create a daily rounds team, who should be on that team, and how you can integrate its function into the daily operation of your shelter. And then we will discuss some practical tips and techniques for actually making it work. So, to start out, we will talk a little bit about what population management is and what I mean when I say that. One definition is, population management is the use of evidence-based decision making to influence the flow of animals to the shelter. So again that's a very proactive thing. That evidence based portion that I'm talking about is information that you're going to collect when you're doing daily rounds and you're actively managing the population in the shelter. And then, notice, you're going to influence the flow. It's not just something that's going to happen on its own. You actually play an active role in that. And the goals of the population management plan are to enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of each and every animal that's in the shelter as well as to increase the lifesaving capacity of the shelter as a whole. So how do daily rounds fit into a population management plan? Dr. Levy talked about the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines Standard of Care, which hopefully everybody has seen, and there is actually a population management section in there, and they have split that population management section into two components. One is monitoring of statistical data, and they talk about the importance of measuring monthly intake and monthly outcome of animals, figuring out where they

are coming from, where they are going, and keeping track of that information. Then the second component of population management is maintaining capacity for care. So I have split that up into three different areas. The first being intake diversion. We will talk a little bit about each of these and then obviously a little bit more time on daily rounds. The second being daily rounds. And then the third being pathway planning.

So we will start by intake diversion because this is, as it says, a practical approach to actually reducing intakes. Let's start at the beginning. I have listed just a couple of ways that many shelters have found to be successful ways of proactively diverting intake away from the shelter. Finding animals placement or some other option before they actually arrive at the shelter. Closing night drop boxes, offering behavior counseling. We know that behavioral problems are the No. 1 reason animals enter shelters. So maybe we can do something about that before they get there. Encouraging owners to rehome animals themselves is an option that many shelters are successful with. How about transferring puppies and kittens to foster homes so that as soon as they come in or maybe even before they come into the shelter, you have a foster home lined up that's ready to take those puppies and kittens so they never have to come in and go through the shelter system. You can restrict or schedule owner relinquishment even for the open admission municipal shelters. Very few, if you actually really scrutinize the legal code, very

few really have to take in owner relinquished animals. Of course, that's a great service that we want to offer the public. But if you're faced with a disease outbreak or severe crowding in your shelter, you might want to consider restricting owner relinquishment for a period of time, not stopping altogether, or scheduling it for a time when you can better take care of the animals that are coming in. Then one of our favorite ones at UF is trapping to return for feral cats. So intake diversion is a way of proactively managing animals when they come into the shelter. Pathway planning is a proactive approach to animal disposition. This is the idea that you're going to identify the likely outcome for that animal and insure that it gets there as quickly as possible. So you know in your organization when an animal comes in what the most likely outcome for that animal is going to be most of the time. If you have a cat that comes in with a collar and a tag, that's a pretty rare event, right? You know that there is a good chance you are going to be able to find a home for that or find the owner of that animal. It's probably a lost pet. So you are going to set that animal on a pathway for tracking down that lost owner. Another example might be a purebred puppy that comes in. Say it's a purebred Dachshund. And you know you have a really great Dachshund rescue group in the area. So the pathway planning for that animal is going to be to get it to Dachshund rescue as soon as possible. Basically, you have a good idea of what is going to happen when the animal comes in. So let's start getting on a pathway and get it there as soon as possible. This is important because we're going to define this pathway when the

animal comes into the shelter, but we're going to review this pathway during daily rounds. So it doesn't have to stay on that pathway that you put it on. It's just something that you have to keep in the back of your mind when you're managing the population to get the animal two weeks out as efficiently as possible.

So just a couple of examples of pathway planning. Here are the four basic ways that most animals leave our sheltering organizations. Return to owner. Obviously that's ideal, our number one way of getting them out. So ways that you can insure that that happens efficiently and effectively is to have proper microchip scanning. The picture here, probably not the best way to scan an animal for a chip, it does actually work. And then lost and found. Making sure you have a lost and found book that's kept up to date. You have somebody that is going through that and trying to match up lost animals with the strays that are coming to your facility. Animals on a pathway to adoption. So a couple of options that we use are fast track adoptions. That's the animal that you know is super adoptable, a really cute little kitten. So what you're going to do is get it through the system as quickly as possible. Move it to the front of the line for spay/neuter. Move it to the front of the line for your feline or whatever, other procedures that need to happen to that kitten before it gets adopted. This way, it can get out on the adoption floor and get into a home as quickly as possible without having to wait for all the other animals that may have actually came in before it. Open selection is

another method of pathway planning for adoptable animals. So this is the idea that, instead of us as workers in the shelter having to choose which animals go up for adoption, let the public choose. So open the stray holding areas up to the public. Let them walk through and decide which animals they want so they can select the animals for adoption themselves. And obviously there are stray holding periods, so they may not be able to take the animal home right away, but they can put their name on a list, and then when that animal's holding period is up, it's automatically ready to go and you have a home lined up. Transfer is another way that animals leave the shelter. So we want to make sure that we have set up means for that to happen quickly and as efficiently as possible. There is some organizations that we work with that have set up programs where if they get a litter of puppies or kittens that come into the shelter, they will stay in the lobby of the shelter and then the rescue group will come and take them directly from the lobby, or better yet, the animal control officer who picks up the litter of puppies or kittens will deliver them directly to the different organization that's ready and willing and able to take care of them. So a couple of examples there. Then euthanasia unfortunately is another way that animals tend to leave our facilities. So you want to be sure that you have people that are trained and scheduled to perform euthanasia when it's necessary. It's especially important when you have animals relinquished by an owner for euthanasia. You don't want to have them waiting in the shelter for that to happen. You want to get that done as efficiently as possible.

So that brings us to daily rounds which we talked about. Proactive approach to intake, proactive approach to outcome, daily rounds is a practical approach to in-shelter care. So this has distinct functions from veterinary and facility rounds and underlying functions there, because it may actually happen at the same time depending on your organization. So when I say veterinary rounds, I'm talking about the veterinarian going around or the veterinary staff going around monitoring animals that are sick or that are under medical treatment and updating their progress. Facility rounds might be when people go around the shelter and make an assessment of the general building. Are there doors that are broken or need to be fixed? Are the aisle-ways clear of clutter? Is it safe for people to walk through? And that's different from daily rounds that we're talking about here. You can call it whatever you want. I think they call it population rounds at Jacksonville, and Dr. Jacks can talk to you about that. But the point is that there is a specific function. So the function of the daily rounds we're talking about is the managed population. It means we're going to identify problems with the animals that are in our care, identify any holdups that are preventing them from getting to their outcome as quickly as possible. So the goals, we want to identify their needs, both physical and behavioral, we want to create a response plan, and we want to insure accountability to make sure that response plan gets carried out. So why do we need them? Again, we have the guidelines here that I put a picture up on the slide. So it's become a best practice to

perform daily rounds. This appears multiple times in the guidelines, two times during the population management section, as I mentioned before. So it says inspection of all animals must be performed daily in order to routinely evaluate and monitor adequacy of capacity and to identify needs. And it appears again in the medical health and physical wellbeing section. Rounds must be conducted at least once every 24 hours by a trained individual in order to visually observe and monitor the health and wellbeing of every animal. And that's really one of the reasons why a veterinarian needs to be involved in this process as well, because they are specifically trained to recognize illness in animals. So who else is involved? We have a team of staff members that we want to see doing daily rounds. The first person I want to identify is a population manager. He may have some other role in the shelter, but they are going to be one person who is designated to be the population manager. They are going to be in charge of maintaining the list that we will talk about and show you of all the animals and what their needs are that are identified during daily rounds. You want to have a member of the operations management team on this daily rounds team as well. These are the people that are going to insure that tasks get completed. They are usually the ones responsible for the daily husbandry of the animals and daily monitoring that happens. So you want to make sure that they are in the loop and they have some decision-making capabilities as well. Of course, you want a member of the veterinary staff which we will talk more about. They are going to be the ones who are trained to identify the medical and behavioral needs of

the animals in their care and can offer some advice and support for how you can manage the animals as you identify needs along your daily rounds, walk-thrus. And then it's always a good idea to have a member of the executive management team perform daily rounds with you.

Frequently these individuals are very busy running the shelter and don't actually get time to get on the floor and see what's actually going on in the facility. We recommend that at minimum they participate in daily rounds once a week. So what exactly does this group of people do? They walk through the shelter, physically walk through the shelter. That's really important. A lot of places will work with shelters. They have an idea in their head that they are performing daily rounds by looking at a printout of inventory and going through their head what's in the kennel or looking at what's online. You have to actually walk through the shelter each day and evaluate each and every animal. So these are the five questions that we want you to ask in your mind as you're going through and looking at each individual. First of all, who are you? Does this animal have identification? Is it the correct identification? Does the description on the cage card match the animal that's in the cage? How are you? How is the animal medically? How is the animal behaviorally? Are you where you should be? Is this a sick animal that's mixed in with the general population that we need to identify a different space for him to live? Is it a neonatal kitten in with a bunch of adult cats that have specific infectious disease risks? We need to know those things and identify them. And

then do you need something today? This is where the action part comes in. We have looked at these animals, and we have seen that they are in the shelter. They have their ID. They are in the right place. Then you want to ask yourself, what's the hold-up? What's preventing this animal from getting out of the facility today? Does this animal need spayed/neutered? Does it need a behavior evaluation? Whatever it might be, you want to be sure that you can identify that. And then do you need something to be scheduled? Maybe the animal's holding period is up tomorrow, so we can schedule its spay/neuter surgery for the following day. So you want to get a handle on that ahead of time and not wait until that period has already passed. So some more specifics about what you want to actually monitor. Again, these things may be occurring at separate times. Monitoring these things may occur during multiple different types of rounds. I mentioned veterinary rounds or facility rounds. You can do animal husbandry rounds. This is where the people who are feeding and cleaning the animals are actually taking account of whether or not the animals are eating, if there is any problems with urination or defecation. They are often the first ones who are going to notice problems. They have to have a way of communicating that as well. They may have communicated that to the daily rounds team, and then when the daily rounds team goes around, they follow up on those items. So if that hasn't happened separately, you are going to have to monitor these things as well. So food and water consumption, urination, defecation, attitude and behavior, ambulation, and signs of illness and pain

are important ones that are frequently forgotten. We will play this video clip here of an animal that I saw when I was walking through a shelter.

(Video) This is an older lab that was relinquished by its owner a day or two before I took this video. So what do you guys think? Is the animal comfortable? Probably uncomfortable and not able to ambulate very well, right? Maybe in pain? Anybody notice anything? Yes. If you didn't notice, his claws are quite overgrown. This is a dog that had been in the shelter for a couple of days and nobody had noticed that, that that was the reason that he was having so much difficulty or at least one of the reasons. So these are the kind of things that you should pick up on your daily rounds and why it's important to actually physically walk through the kennel and look at the animals and observe them for a couple of seconds to catch things like this. So then we will go through a couple of pictures/slides here. Some of them are a little bit subtle and a little bit difficult. I did that on purpose because I want -- this is a more advanced group, and I want to point out the fact that there are some things that may look normal to some people and may take a little bit of extra training and a really keen eye to pick up something that is not quite right. Even though you don't know what it is, that's okay. The point of daily rounds is just to identify that a problem exists and to set up a plan for following up on that problem.

What do people think about the photo on the left with the two cats?

Good. So I heard diarrhea and vomit running down the cage. So we had

a cat on the top that was sick. The cat on the bottom that was healthy was probably not going to be healthy for much longer. Here is an example of where you need to identify this as a sick cat in the population with healthy animals. He may need treatment. He may need additional medical care, but the point is we have to identify that and then have a way of following up on that. So that's what daily rounds can do. How about the cat on the top right? I hear he has a litter box issue. What's the issue? Yeah, it's too small. It's not appropriate for the size of that cat. That's a big cat. He can't get in and out of that box. It's falling apart. It's not meeting his behavioral needs in a clean environment. How about the cat on the bottom right? He is not spraying. It does look like that. He can't hold his tail up, I heard in the back. Yeah. Is this cage appropriate for this cat to be living in? No. He is very uncomfortable. He can't even move around normally in this environment. You would have to identify a different place for him to go when you saw this. How about this? Does this look abnormal to anybody? There is water up at the front of the cage. That's a good point. Yeah, that's a good observation. I heard somebody say he is curled up like he doesn't feel well. So I will tell you that this is a dog, you may actually recognize him because you saw him yesterday in somebody else's presentation, but this is a dog in a shelter in South Florida in late spring. So it's not cold. You might think he is cold. He is kind of curled up on his bed. Other dogs at the front of the cage around him are barking, acting normally. So I walked by, and I saw this. I thought something was not right. So I looked a little closer. Do you guys see the

nasal discharge coming out of this dog? You may remember from Dr. Crawford's presentation this is the dog that had streptococcus. I think he was co-infected with distemper as well, if I remember correctly. Definitely something that you need to pick up as you're walking through the shelter and take notice of. So that might be subtle, because the only thing that caught my eye was this dog was laying there, just didn't look right for the rest of the environment that was going on.

So how about the cat on the top left? A happy comfortable cat? Stressed cat? See some head nods. So it's a stressed cat. Does anybody have any guesses as to why this cat is stressed? What was that? No potty box? That might help. I will show you the whole picture. All right. So again, it becomes pretty obvious when you walk through why this cat is not coping well in this shelter. He is being housed next to a dog. So you guys probably all know that that's probably the No. 1 stressor for cats is being co-housed or housed near or within visual or auditory distance of strange dogs that they are not familiar with. How about the dog on the right? No, he is just mid-bark. There was a comment made that there was something wrong with his mouth. This one might be a little bit tricky. So remember the five questions I put up before? Who is this dog? Can anybody tell? There is no cage card, no number on the cage, no ID on the dogs. There is no way of figuring out which animal this actually is. If I showed you the full picture there with three or four dogs that looked pretty similar to him in this bank of runs, none of them had

any ID. So there is probably somebody running around in the shelter who knows in their head which dog this is, but that doesn't help other staff members and the medical team that may need to come in and perform treatment on specific animals. How about this cat? So I heard a couple of people say he is sick or she rather. She might be. So they have a couple of treats that are sitting up on the ledge there, and I can tell you I put those there a few hours before this picture was taken. This cat was not eating. How about for the veterinarians in the room? Do you have any particular concerns about this cat not eating? I think I heard hepatic lipidosis. So whenever you have an overweight cat that suddenly stops eating, they are at risk for severe liver problems. That's a huge concern that you may not notice if you're not walking through the shelter looking through the animals and keeping track of whether or not they are eating.

This is a tricky one also. What do people see here? Pot belly, I heard. That's the key observation. What do you think most people might think when they walk through here? Pregnant. Okay. What if I told you it's a male? I hear it. This is a dog that is in right heart failure from heart worm disease. There is fluid building up in his belly. So again, another important reason why you may need actually veterinary eyes on this particular patient to determine that that's a medical problem and not just a dog with worms or pregnant if it was a female. What's going on here? All right. Good. I'm hearing lots of things. No food, no water, no bedding. I heard somebody had the key observation here. This one

puppy is out by himself. That's a red flag for a lot of veterinarians in the room. When you have a litter of kittens or puppies and there is one that's just off to the side, frequently that's one that is ill. In this case, this is a puppy that had diarrhea. I don't know what the cause was, but I just noticed that this was happening. So it's a way of keying in on a sick puppy that might need a little bit of extra care. So a plan has to be developed to take care of this animal.

This is the last one. Maybe a tricky one too. What do you guys see wrong with this picture? Salivating. So veterinarians or veterinary staff, what do you think about that when you see a salivating cat? I heard something cotton mouth, I heard calicivirus, dental disease. There is one other. So if we actually looked in this cat's mouth we would see that it had some ulcers on its tongue. Calicivirus would be one thing that you would be concerned about. The other thing is that toxicity from ammonia cleaners can cause that too. Good. So I purposely did show you the ulcers in the mouth because you would not see that when you are just walking through the shelter. All you are going to see is this. So you need somebody who recognizes, hey, this is a problem, we need to investigate this a little bit more.

All right. So just a couple of special considerations and special points when you're doing these walk-thrus. You want to have somebody -- again, this may not be the daily rounds team. It may be the

actual animal husbandry person who is cleaning and feeding that are filling out a check sheet to say whether or not an animal ate, whether or not it urinated or defecated normally, and then the daily rounds team comes at a later time and actually monitors that check sheet and follows up on items that are on there. But some type of monitoring has to occur before cleaning and feeding. This picture provides a good example why. Look at all the information that we would not have if this cage had been cleaned and the animal had been fed. There is diarrhea in the cage. The food bowl is full of food. He has not eaten. The water is discolored. I'm not sure if you can appreciate that on the projector, but it's a little yellow colored water. So it's actually disinfecting in the water. So the dog didn't have a clean water supply. So all these things you would not have noticed if you had come around later and then decide to observe the dog at a later point. Another important practical point is that if you have group housed animals, somebody has to be monitoring them during feeding. Obviously it's important assessing appetite which you're not going to know if there are two or more animals in the cage which one ate the food if you come back later. And then also to note some conflicts. And then I have a video clip here that I will demonstrate the importance of monitoring during feeding. (Video) So the staff members did what they thought was right. They put two food bowls down. They separated them at different ends of the room, but there were so many other animals to take care of that they didn't have time to stand there and watch like I did. So these dogs were housed together for at least a couple of days when this

video was taken. We don't know if that black and white dog had anything to eat in the last two or three days. So that's one other reason that there is a handout in the appendix to the notes to this section that talks about conquering crowding. That's one of the -- daily rounds is one way of unwinding crowding if you're facing that in your shelter. That relieves the problem that I just mentioned, that this person didn't have time because there were so many other animals to take care of. They didn't have time to stand there and watch to make sure everybody was eating. So if you're instituting an active daily rounds program, it's one of the tools that you can use to unwind that crowding so that you do have time to take care of the animals like they need to be.

So just a couple of words on actually getting things done. Here is an example, and you have a copy of this sheet in your notes as well. A sample daily rounds form that you might use. You are going to record the date, the animal's ID number, the kennel number, and what's the action that you want to be taken that day on the animal, any specific notes. You might have to have an explanation there. Why is this animal not at its outcome yet? The goal is to get them through the system as quickly as possible. So you want to know what's the holdup. And then you can make an action item. You can request it. You will know who requested it. And then you have a slot for whether or not it was completed and when it was completed. So the benefit of writing this down is that you can look at this data and go back and identify what are the obstacles to

animal flow? Are we finding that animals are frequently waiting for spay/neuter, and that's what the holdup is? Are they frequently waiting for behavior evaluation? Are they getting sick in the shelter and that's what's taking them so long to get to their outcome? You can go back and evaluate this information and then take steps to correct that so you can move them through more quickly. Then at last, open communication. It's written down. Everybody knows what's supposed to happen, who is supposed to do it, and you can insure that it actually does occur. With that, we will switch over to Dr. Jacks, and she will give you some information about how she instituted daily rounds at Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services.