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University of Wisconsin-Madison Shelter Medicine Program, University of California-Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, Dr. Jeanette O'Quin of The Ohio State University, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians wholeheartedly support and recommend animal control agencies and animal shelters follow the recommendations found in the [recently released statements from the National Animal Care & Control Association \(NACA\)](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 carries the possibility of creating a significant animal welfare crisis in shelters experiencing reduced capacity for care due to staffing shortages, the need for social distancing, and reduced outcome opportunities via adoption, foster or rescue.

In an effort to mitigate the short and long-term effects of this pandemic, we encourage animal control agencies and shelters to implement the NACA recommendations beginning immediately.

NACA's statements incorporate the following key recommendations:

- Animal control agencies should take active measures to eliminate non-essential shelter intake.
- Discontinue low priority/non-emergency activity (non-aggressive stray animal pick-up, nuisance complaints, etc.).
- At this time, continue to respond to emergency and high priority calls (law enforcement assistance, injured or sick stray animals, bite and dangerous dog complaints, etc.).
- To preserve critical medical supplies and minimize potential for human contact exposure, shelters and spay-neuter clinics should limit surgeries to emergency cases only.

Importantly, NACA notes that "shelters should continue providing live outcomes for sheltered cats and dogs. The lack of immediately available spay and neuter services should not be a reason for shelter euthanasia. Further, anticipated personnel and supply resource depletion in shelters dictate that essential services and lifesaving capacity be preserved by reducing the number of animals in custody as quickly as possible. This should be done by expediting the movement of animals to adoptive or foster homes and not extending the stay of animals in the shelter for spay or neuter surgery."

Sincerely,

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