

Animal Advisory Commission Meeting

December 12 follow-up regarding agenda item #4

Question: were any of the reported dog deaths in October 2022 were from improperly stored vaccines or vet techs falsifying records saying they gave vaccines when they did not?

Response: Essentially, the question related to a dog who passed with distemper, and whether the animal had incorrect records stating that they had been vaccinated when this was not the case - whether intentionally, or by miscommunication.

Prior to the matter being raised at the Commission, our Medical Director, Dr Bardzinski, had investigated a small number of distemper cases onsite, where the timing could have suggested the animal had been exposed and developed the disease while in our care. Clearly the population of animals that we care for are susceptible to exposure before they come to us, but we are especially concerned when we experience preventable disease occurrences while the animal is in our care.

Dr. Bardzinski's review looked at the procedures and practices employed for vaccinating animals in our care, and identified 3 potential points of failure - our ability to give the vaccine, storage of vaccine onsite, and manufacturer vaccine quality, However, Dr. Bardzinski was able to determine that the dogs in question were correctly vaccinated, and that the records had been correctly entered.

Following the review, we instigated 3 changes in procedure to further improve our practice - (1) where a dog is reactive and difficult to vaccinate, our procedure for sedating an animal to complete intake requirements has been codified; (2) all APA fridges used to store vaccines now have specific temperature gauges, and if these climb above the required storage temperature, all vaccines are disposed; (3) If we receive a notice from our vaccine manufacturer that a batch they sent was not properly stored, all vaccines will be disposed.

Dr. Bardzinski had discussed this case in a volunteer/foster town-hall, and shared the changes in our procedure. She is concerned that there was a misunderstanding that the dog had passed because of a failure to vaccinate as the dog was reactive - while we have codified our Intake staff's ability to request a sedated intake exam, this was to improve procedure, not to retrospectively correct a failing.