

# Upcoming ASPCApro Webinars

[aspcapro.org/webinars](http://aspcapro.org/webinars)

**Daily Rounds: How to Decrease Length of Stay**

July 31 3-4pm ET

**Promoting Your Grant to Attract More Funding**

August 14 3-4pm ET

**Funding Your Spay/Neuter Program**

August 20 3-4pm ET

**ASPCA Spay/Neuter Grants: A More Targeted Approach**

August 27 3-4pm ET

**Building Collaborations  
between  
Private Practice Veterinarians  
and  
Animal Welfare Organizations**

# Understanding the Private Veterinary Practitioner

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# Private Practitioners & Humane Organizations

**We are ALL on the same TEAM!**



# Community Outreach

## Rabies clinics

- Generate good will
- Benefit
  - Public health
  - Local organizations
    - 4-H
    - Volunteer Fire Companies
    - SPCA



# Veterinarians do Voluntary & *'Involuntary'* Pro Bono Work

- Locate owners of found animals and adopt out strays
- Cruelty evaluations and court appearances
- Clients who do not pay
- Discounts for special situations
  - Veterinarian can meet with accountant to determine affordable discounts to humane organization



# Veterinarians do Voluntary & *'Involuntary'* Pro Bono Work

- Emergency patients with unknown owners



# Economic Challenges for Veterinary Profession

- Increasing costs of veterinary education with decreased income expectations
- Increasing competition from internet pharmacies and 'big box' stores
- Increasing 'standards of care' require expensive equipment purchases
- Competition (?) from low cost spay/neuter clinic in town



# Helen Fath Greene Bequest to Pennsylvania SPCA



# Potter County Animal Assistance Project (PCAAP)





# Potter County Animal Assistance Project (PCAAP)

## Trap/Neuter/Return of free-roaming cats



# *Reaching Out to Underserved Owner /Animal Community*

- Poverty in Potter County, Pennsylvania
  - Population 17,487
  - 3,338 (19%) receive medical/other form of assistance
- Programs developed to serve the underserved
  - Low cost spay/neuter for low income residents
  - Pet Food Bank
- Additional project - Cruelty hotline

# A 'Walking Around' Style of Management

**Veterinarians, Shelter Managers,  
and Humane Organization Administrators**

***VISIT*** each other's facilities

***MEET*** the employees/volunteers

***LISTEN*** to each other's concerns

***TARGET*** the underserved animal population

***PROBLEM-SOLVE*** together!

# We Can Work Together!



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*Previously Reception Manager*  
*Commonwealth Animal Hospital*  
*Charlotte, NC*

# Commonwealth Animal Hospital (CAH)

## Privately owned in Charlotte, North Carolina

- Started 20 years ago
- 4 veterinarians, 14 support staff
- Loyal client base

## In 2012, began focusing more on community outreach/ underserved animal populations

- Supply drive for local non-profit animal rescue (Project Halo was chosen by staff)
- Easy to organize, inexpensive
- Participation by staff and CAH client-base
- Outcome: Client-base eager to help CAH become community outreach provider. Over one month, collected supplies that filled 10 vehicles!





# “Getting to Know You...”

- Success of CAH/Project HALO supply drive was promoted in-person at hospital, through client email, and social media
- Project HALO
  - Began using CAH to provide wellness services and emergency care for organization’s animals
  - Advertised importance of spay/neuter, fostering, and rescue in CAH lobby prompting clients to ask questions about rescue organizations in area

***CAH staff and clients requested that hospital host an even bigger community outreach project ...***

# Commonwealth Animal Hospital

## *Adoption Fair*

### **Participants**

- 8 local non-profit animal rescue organizations
- Animal control agency
- Neighborhood businesses, other animal welfare organizations (agreed to donate a portion of their proceeds to participating rescue organizations)

### **Owner and clients of Commonwealth Animal Hospital**

- Donated 100% of operating and advertising costs for event
- Expenses were tax-deductible
- Provided microchips to raise funds for rescue organizations

# Commonwealth Animal Hospital

## *Adoption Fair*

### **Impact**

- 1,000 attendees
- 45 animals adopted
- New foster homes and volunteers recruited
- CAH recognized by community as animal welfare provider
- New clients for CAH









***So how did these community outreach projects transform into a spay/neuter project for a private veterinary practice?...***

# Spay/Neuter Project

- CAH client shared hospital's outreach efforts with ASPCA and learned about grant funding opportunities
- (...after much discussion and planning!) CAH applied for an ASPCA grant to allow *FREE* spays/neuters for 4 local non-profit rescue organizations
  - Friends of Feral Felines
  - American Pit Bull Foundation
  - North Mecklenburg Animal Rescue
  - Rescued Me
- Statements of impact were provided by rescue organizations
  - Indicated that free spay/neuter would allow them to transfer additional animals from shelters to rescue organization

# Spay/Neuter Project

- In August of 2012, CAH was awarded a \$10,000 grant by ASPCA to offer free spays/neuters to underserved animals
- Funds were used exclusively to offer animals same level of care as any other CAH patients
- Out of pocket cost for CAH...nothing





# Spay/Neuter Project

- Project animal spays/neuters scheduled during normal operating hours and foster/adoptive parents followed same pre-surgery and post-surgery instructions as any other CAH client
- Project planned during CAH's slowest time of year
- 1 to 2 project animal spays/neuters performed each day over 6 month period





# Benefits

- 4 doctors on staff became more knowledgeable and efficient spay/neuter surgeons
- Morale of CAH staff continually boosted by thankful rescue organizations and adoptive parents - project viewed by staff as a team-building, community-service activity
- New clients created and even greater relationship with participating rescue organizations developed



# Benefits

- CAH clients
  - Felt proud to have chosen a hospital willing "to give back to underserved animals"
  - Learned about local rescue organizations and importance of spay/neuter
  - Trusted CAH as a resource when selecting a new animal
  - Asked CAH which rescue organizations they chose to support and why. One inquiry resulted in a \$10,000 donation to North Mecklenburg Animal Rescue

***And most importantly...***



***124 lives were saved!***

# Private Practice Partnerships

*Creating lasting change...*  
*Using local resources!*



**Ruth Steinberger**  
**Director Spay FIRST!**

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***Some people view a mobile spay/neuter unit as a clinic on wheels... while others view each standing clinic as a mobile spay/neuter unit that simply got stuck!***



High volume private practice partnerships bring together an animal welfare organization and one or more private clinics to provide spay/neuter services.

They are most effective in low-income, low-population communities, or in areas where limited services are needed, such as for feral cat colonies or around student housing in college towns.

**Why does high volume  
“set aside” time  
work where  
traditional private  
practice models fail?**



## Traditional Private Practice Programs

- Voucher program
  - Reduced costs during regular hours
  - Overall loss of productive time
  - No-shows, total loss
  - Volume must be limited

## High Volume Private Practice Programs

- Set aside time block
  - No loss of productive time
  - Schedule “extras” to compensate for possible no-shows
  - Volume generates increased funds

# Benefits

## Veterinary Clinic

- Financial
  - Positive revenue flow
- Flexible
- Potential clients
- Community betterment
- Staff involvement

## Humane Organization

- Minimal start-up costs
- Easy
  - Most activities relate to program structure not direct services
- Easy fundraising
  - No capital expenditure
  - Virtually no overhead



# Drawbacks

## Veterinary Clinic

- If poorly organized there may be net loss
- Staff concerns
- Income screening vital
- May not fit with existing protocols
- Discounting concerns
- Often requires excellent communication

## Humane Organization

- May outgrow capacity
- Not flexible structure

# Budget

Five surgeries weekly (or 20 monthly) at \$45 average  
\$225 weekly, \$900 monthly  
**\$10,800/yearly**

Ten surgeries weekly (or 40 monthly) at \$45 average  
**\$22,000/yearly**

*Clients pay in cash or money order, no credit cards or extra \$2 fee*

# Two Models

- One morning each week;  
5 to 10 surgeries  
(20 to 40 monthly)
- One day per month when the office is closed;  
25 to 35 surgeries

**While reaching the same  
overall numbers,  
each model has its  
unique ups and downs.**



# One Morning Each Week

## Benefits

- Makes use of 'down time' within the normal day  
Most clinics can provide 5-8 surgeries in 2-3 hours
- Relies on clinic staff, does not require volunteers with clinic skills
- Although staff time is used, it is during the regular workday, overhead is not increased

## Drawbacks

- Clinic staff is responsible for check-in, may resent "extra" work or become frustrated with clients

***\*\*Partnering humane organization  
should provide a lunch each month\*\****

# A Weekend Day Each Month

## Benefits

- A busy clinic with no 'slow' time can still participate
- No extra work for the clinic staff
  - This is great for groups with several committed spay/neuter volunteers

## Drawbacks

- The veterinarian loses one day off each month
- Services are less frequent, it may be necessary to make more urgent plans for pregnant animals
- Requires several skilled, committed volunteers
- Non-staff will be working in the clinic (CDS concerns)
- If hiring extra staff, overall cost is higher than other model

# Rules of Engagement

- Income screening so clinic does not compete with itself
- Tasks clearly defined
- Realistic expectations
- Communication vital



# The Humane Organization

- Maintains a phone line separate from clinic phone
- Advertising, community outreach, and education
- Fundraising for those unable to pay the full price, or for feral cats





# Sealing the Deal

- Communication so everyone “owns’ the program
- In-house model, bonus lunch for staff compensates for the extra work
- Publicity for the veterinarian

# Veterinary Clinic Don't Dos!

- Upselling and add-ons (guilt to make extra sales)
  - Clients will feel “bait and switch”
- “Over screening” (looking out the window to see what the client drives!)
- Punishing poverty (no previous veterinary history, outdoor dog, client obviously low-income)

# Humane Society Don't Dos!

- Expecting all services to be discounted
- “Sliding through” clients over the income range
- Asking for reduced cost spay/neuters on other days

# FAQs

## **Does the humane organization have to be non-profit?**

Not for starters. However, they are responsible for the portion of the surgery not paid for by the owner or caregiver. If car washes and bake sales are no longer enough, a non-profit is necessary.

## **Can clinic staff help as humane volunteers or even organize the program?**

Yes, but the tasks need to be defined so tasks that are performed by staff do not come to be expected of the clinic itself.



# Questions?



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