



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IMPLEMENTED AT COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

Progress Report Presented to County Board of Supervisors

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) -- Yesterday, the County Board of Supervisors received a report on improvements and changes implemented in the Animal Services division of the Public Health Department following recommendations received from an American Humane Assessment completed in 2015. The Board recognized significant positive changes and expressed appreciation to the staff, volunteers and numerous community stakeholders who have made meaningful changes in the lives of animals and their owners in Santa Barbara County.

An Oversight Team consisting of staff, volunteers and community partners is advising the process, while committees are developing solutions to standing issues common to animal shelter operations. Medical care for sheltered animals is an area to receive significant improvements. In the past year, the department hired a Director of Shelter Medicine and a second Registered Veterinary Technician that provide additional expertise and resources devoted to assessing and delivering veterinary care.

In addition, each of the three County-operated animal shelters is now conducting daily rounds assessing the needs of animals in their care. Community partners, including the Animal Care Foundation, Companion Animal Placement & Assistance (CAPA), the Animal Shelter & Assistance Program (ASAP) and Bunnies Urgently Needing Shelter (BUNS), have provided additional funding for medical treatment. These activities support health, quality care and well-being of the animals.

The department is also testing a new approach to animal adoptions. A conversational adoption approach begins by talking with potential adopters to better learn about them and the type of animal that will do best in their home and family environment. It is a process of matching for adoption versus selecting out potential adopters. The result is expected to be an increase in adoptions.

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COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES MAKING POSITIVE CHANGES

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Staff also reported that its rate of adoptable animals released live back into the community from the County animal shelters has increased. Over the past five years, the live release rate went from 77 percent in Fiscal Year 2011-12 to 92 percent in FY 2015-16. Many more animals that come into our shelters leave to live with families.

The Oversight Committee will continue working with staff until June 2017, but the continual and ongoing progress is dependent upon dedicated staff, volunteers and stakeholders who make this a constant priority.

To learn more about the great work conducted by Animal Services, go to <http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/animal.aspx?id=23086>.

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