



Saving Shelter Animals

The UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program aims to improve the quality of life for animals in shelters. The program, a major component of the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine's Center for Companion Animal Health, advances the specialty of shelter medicine through health and behavior studies, education of veterinary professionals, and veterinary service to animal shelters. The program has had an enormous impact on the lives of thousands of animals in shelters, transforming how shelters are built, operate and respond to outbreaks of disease.

Since the program began in 2001 as the first effort of its kind, shelter medicine experts have:

- Raised awareness of the need to approach the health and behavior issues of shelter animals through improvements in veterinary preventive medicine and management of disease
- Helped shelters stop disease outbreaks and designed better facilities
- Participated in numerous studies designed to reduce infections in shelter cats and dogs
- Trained veterinary residents in this specialty



Vibrant collaboration - The Shelter Medicine team created an innovative partnership with the local Yolo County shelter for student and resident training and shelter animal care. Koret clinicians provide medical care to the shelter, and UC Davis veterinary medicine students and residents participate in the shelter's spay/neuter surgeries, the treatment of sick and injured animals, and the provision of full medical assessments for animals - gaining critical experience in how a high-quality shelter medicine program operates. UC Davis clinicians have helped implement programs and protocols (including a Daily Health Monitoring Program staffed by UC Davis Animal Sciences undergraduate interns) that resulted in the animal shelter having an average live release rate of 90% in 2013. This ranks Yolo

County Animal Services, a public, municipal shelter, among the highest performing in the state of California in terms of positive animal outcomes.

Benefitting students and animals

- Through elective coursework, lectures in the core curriculum, and clinical rotations, faculty have trained hundreds of UC Davis students to become the shelter medicine providers of the future. More than twice as many UC Davis graduates are working in shelters than graduates of the next leading institution.
- Faculty co-chaired national committees to perform a detailed Job Task Analysis and develop a curriculum for shelter medicine residency training. This has been used as the basis for shelter medicine residency training programs at multiple institutions in the U.S. and abroad. Former veterinary residents of the Koret program represent half the residency-trained shelter medicine specialists in the world, and have gone on to leadership positions consulting, directing major shelter medical programs, and advising national animal welfare organizations.

Continuing education – Veterinary faculty within the Koret Shelter Medicine Program have delivered hundreds of continuing education presentations for the public, shelter professionals, veterinary technicians, veterinarians, and others.

Saving lives and money – Veterinary faculty, in partnership with the University of Florida Maddie’s Shelter Medicine Program, created an educational campaign called “The Million Cat Challenge,” which provides resources and guidance to help shelters reduce euthanasia of cats in North American animal shelters. The campaign’s target is to save one million cats by 2019.

Reducing death from disease – Shelter clinicians discovered a novel strain of virulent calicivirus in cats, and provided the first published documentation of a major outbreak of hemorrhagic Streptococcus zooepidemicus in shelter dogs. Both discoveries have had immediate practical impact, resulting in successful management of subsequent outbreaks, greatly reducing the morbidity and mortality caused by these two infections.

Web-based outreach - Koret’s website, www.sheltermedicine.com, receives more than 400,000 unique visitors per year from over 100 countries and throughout the U.S. Over 117,000 visitors have ‘bookmarked’ the website, and visitors download an average of 600 information sheets every day.



1201 Consultation services - In 2007, the program became the first veterinary group to offer shelter consultation services. Clients have included shelters ranging in size from housing a few hundred to sheltering more than 50,000 animals per year. Consulting services have been offered to municipalities, private foundations, veterinary hospitals and boarding facilities. Veterinary faculty have performed site consultations with over 50 organizations, caring for more than 500,000 animals annually; and now also offers help in facility design of shelters to improve the quality of life and help avoid the spread of infectious disease.

Academic program support - The high regard for UC Davis Veterinary Medicine has encouraged other university programs to follow in UC Davis’ footsteps, incorporating shelter medicine training into their academic programs. Koret faculty have consulted closely with faculty and administration at 18 US veterinary colleges, along with those in the UK, Japan, Australia and the Netherlands. The majority of veterinary schools in the U.S. now offer clinical and/or didactic coursework in shelter medicine.

Vital Shelter Medicine Resources Created

- The Koret Shelter Medicine Program’s first textbook on shelter medicine, [Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff](#) includes four chapters from UC Davis veterinary medicine faculty and other UCD faculty; the second textbook, [Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters](#), was co-edited by KSMP’s program director. It offers expert, practical information specifically relevant to the infectious diseases most often encountered in shelters. The book also has general chapters on wellness, vaccinations, disinfection, outbreak control and more. Both texts have sold thousands of copies and can be found on the bookshelves of shelters throughout the world.
- Faculty have co-authored guidelines for care of sheltered animals with broad relevance to veterinary practice in general, including the [American Animal Hospital Association Canine Vaccination Guidelines](#), the [American Association of Feline Practitioners Feline Vaccination Advisory Panel Report](#), and the [Association of Shelter Veterinarians veterinary medical care guidelines for spay-neuter programs](#).
- Veterinary clinicians co-authored the [Association of Shelter Veterinarian’s Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters](#). This detailed 70-page document represents the first published guidelines for care of the millions of animals that pass through shelters annually, and is already being translated into multiple languages.