Creating Meaningful Transfer and Transport Programs

OR Two-Way Streets, Phone Calls With Your Grandmother, and Other Things Your Transfer and Transport Program Should Resemble

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Source

The Comfort Zone

CE Sign In

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Why Transport and Transfer Matter

- Managing shelter capacity

- Reducing length of stay

- Benefitting from connection and partnership

- Community support

Definitions and Shared Language

- Transfer: movement of animals between local organizations, typically involving less travel

- Transport: movement of animals over longer distances

Shared Language

Phrases We Will Use

- Community- centered

- Resource-limited shelters

- Areas with access to care challenges

- People experiencing barriers

- Partnerships

- Capacity for care (of course)

Phrases We Won't Use

- "Bad areas"
- "Cultural differences"
- "Irresponsible owners"
- "Rescue" language
- Blanket terms to describe a diversity of shelters and communities

Checklist for Transfer Out

❑Am I at or over my capacity for care for this population?

❑Will this transfer meaningfully reduce length of stay or free up critical space?

❑Have I clearly defined the population that needs help?

❑Have I explored local or regional placement options first?

❑Am I prepared to share accurate, complete information with potential partners?

❑Am I respecting the partner shelter's capacity and expertise?

Checklist for Transfer In

❑ Will this intake meaningfully support the source shelter's capacity for care and length of stay?

❑ Do I have a clear pathway plan for the animals I'm receiving?

❑ What veterinary services must be completed before movement- and what can be safely done once the animal arrives?

❑ Is there a more local solution available that could serve both animals and communities better?

❑ How does this transfer or transport support the source community, not just the animals?

❑ How does this transfer or transport support my own community?

The Cheat-sheet Checklist

Sending Shelter Checklist

Over C4C?

Helps reduce LOS?

Clear population defined?

Explored local options?

Full transparency?

Respecting partner's role?

Receiving Shelter Checklist

Do we have a pathway plan?

Will this help the source shelter?

Can we meet this population's needs?

Could this be done more locally?

Are we clear on pre/post intake roles?

Are we supporting both communities?

Determining Distance

- **GENERALLY....**
  - Hyperlocal — within the same city, region, or neighboring community
  - Then local or regional — within the same county or metro area
  - Then intrastate — within your state
  - Then, across state lines

Medical Essentials for Safe Transport

- Vaccination
- Sterilization
- Non-sterilization surgery
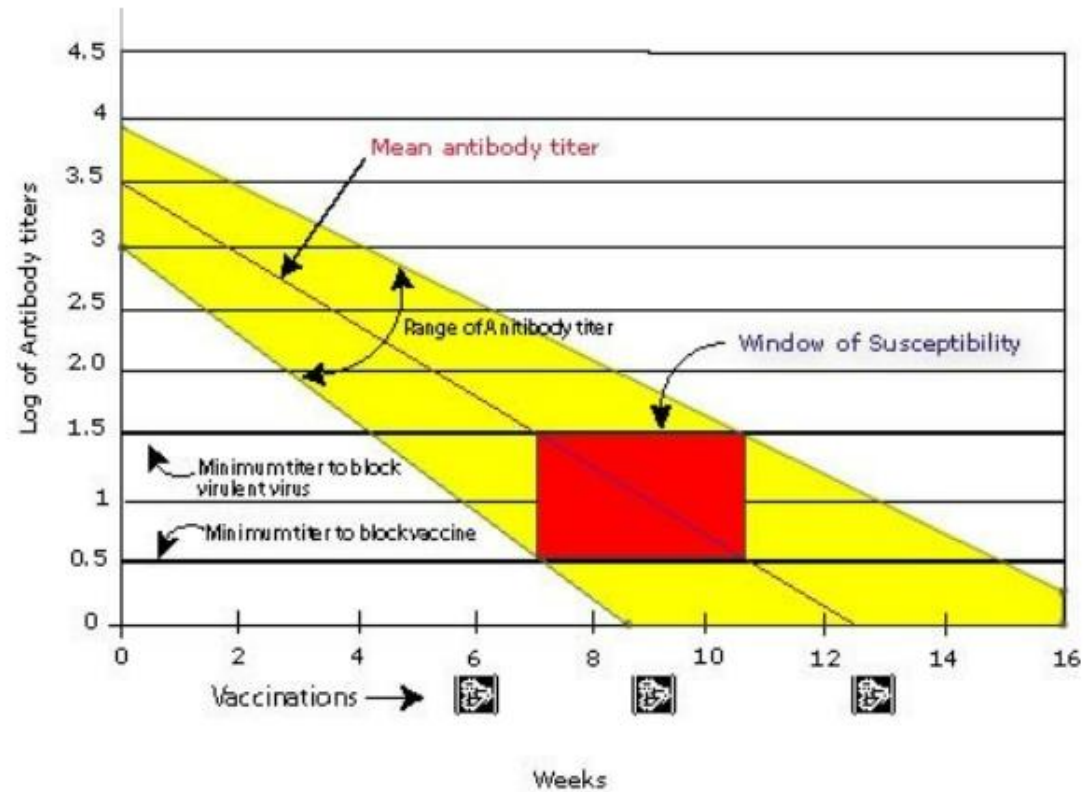- Diagnostic testing and health screenings

Vaccination

- Dogs:
  - DA2PP MLV
  - Bordetella/ Para IN
  - Rabies (if age-eligible and depending on destination regulations)
- Cats:
  - FVRCP
  - Rabies, again depending on age and location

Vaccination

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It is not recommended to delay placement outcomes (e.g. adoption and transport) to allow response to vaccination or to receive a booster. The safer alternative is to secure an outcome with the recommendation that new caretakers continue a veterinary-directed vaccination protocol that reflects the animal's new lifestyle and disease risks.

Vaccination

Vaccination

Sterilization and Other Procedures

Diagnostic Testing

Worms & Germs Blog

- Never do a test without a good reason
- Never do a test without a plan to use the result

Diagnostic Testing Checklist

❑ Does it need to be done at all?

❑ Does it need to be done before transfer?

❑ If it must be done prior to transfer, is it already part of normal operations for the shelter?

❑ If it's not part of normal operations for the shelter, can we support them in adding this step?

Diagnostic Testing with Known Disease

Summary of Medical Priorities

- **Vaccinate early and smart (don't let "numbers" hold animals back)**
- **Don't let sterilization be a barrier**
- **Test when there's a real reason to test**
- **Communicate clearly about what was done and what wasn't**

"Model Practices"

https://theaawa.org/resource_library/companion-animal-transport-model-practices/

- ☑ Capacity for care comes first
- ☑ Animal selection: appropriate candidates
- ☐ Safe transport methods (vehicle requirements, temperature control, sanitation)
- ☑ Disease mitigation
- ☑ Avoiding the "rescue narrative"

Partnership Building-
What Strong Transport & Transfer Programs Have in Common (Or: What They Have in Common with Calls to Your Grandmother)

- Ongoing, two-way communication

- Listen as much as you talk

- Communicate more often than you think you need to

- Clear expectations for medical care and timelines

- A culture of flexibility and grace

- Respect for each partner's unique strengths

Practical Tips that Build Respect and Increase Transparency

- Put things in writing, but....

- Be honest about what you can and can't do

- Don't ghost your partners

- Make space for learning

What Will You Take Home

Additional Learning

- Companion Animal Transport Model Practices: https://theaawa.org/resource_library/companion-animal-transport-model-practices/

- Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters: https://jsmcah.org/index.php/jasv/issue/view/2

- Neonatal Vaccination Recommendations: https://sheltermedicine.wisc.edu/neonatal-vaccination-recommendations/

Questions?

Evaluation