



Maximizing Veterinary Relationships

How to Recruit Veterinary Staff, Volunteers and Partners

Sponsored by
The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association



Recruiting Veterinary Volunteers



Susan Krebsbach, DVM

hsvma.org



HUMANE SOCIETY VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

- National veterinary medical association, founded in 2008
- Focus: animal health & welfare
- Affiliate of The Humane Society of the United States



hsvma.org



HUMANE SOCIETY VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



ADVOCATE

- Animal advocacy and public outreach



EDUCATE

- Educate the public and veterinary profession about animal protection issues
- Presentations and wet labs for veterinary students
- CE for veterinary professionals



SERVE

- Field Services direct care opportunities

hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

Roles of Veterinary Volunteers

- Participate in spay/neuter clinics
- Participate in vaccination clinics
- Act as a medical advisor
- Serve on the board of directors
- Be a medical spokesperson
- Author articles for organization's newsletter and other media



hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

Potential Sources

- Local and/or state veterinary medical associations
 - Information on state VMAs: avma.org/statevma
- Have organization volunteers ask their veterinarians
- Ask veterinary professionals to recruit their peers
- Approach veterinary professionals who work with rescue groups and shelters
- Give a luncheon presentation at local veterinary clinics



hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

Publicize Locally

- Newspaper article with a plug for veterinary volunteers
- Letters to the editor or guest editorial in local newspapers
- Tabling at local veterinary professional events
- Television and/or radio interviews or talk show



hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

Advertise Locally

- Bulletin board postings at local veterinary clinics and organizations
- Advertisement in local professional publications
- Mailing to local veterinary professionals



hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

“Vetiquette” is important!

- Highlight benefits in invitation to veterinary professionals
- Add a personal touch
- Be courteous and respectful of time and ability to participate
- Appropriate response to “No”
- Learn veterinary lingo
- Look professional



hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

The “Feel Good” Factor

- Very powerful and persuasive motivator
- Worthwhile cause ⇨ Helping animals in need
- A sense of giving back to the community




hsvma.org

hsVma
HUMANE SOCIETY
VETERINARY MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION

RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

The “Fun” Factor

- Make it fun!
- Creates positive and memorable experiences
- Participants are more likely to return



hsvma.org

hsVma
HUMANE SOCIETY
VETERINARY MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION

RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

The “Fun” Factor



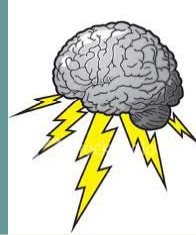
hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

Vesting the Vets

- Solicit input
- Brain storm about ideas
- Involve with the process



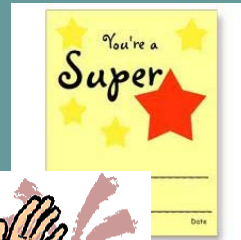
hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

Provide Lavish Recognition/Praise

- Offer clinic promotion in the community
- Advertise individual participation in newsletter and other media
- Certificate of appreciation
- Personal thank yous



hsvma.org



RECRUITING VETERINARY VOLUNTEERS

Points to Remember about Recognition

- Deliver recognition in an open and public way
 - Not a substitute for private, personal thank yous and respect
- Timing is crucial
 - An immediate "thank you" or "great job" is much more important than a proclamation six months later
- Tailor your recognition to the unique needs of the people involved
- Deliver recognition in a personal and honest manner

hsvma.org



Hiring a Shelter Veterinarian



Richard Bachman, DVM

hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Richard Bachman, DVM, Presenter

- Small animal private practice owner for 18 years
- Owner/Medical Director of a shelter medicine consulting and management company for 19 years
- Company has provided veterinary manpower needs for multiple shelters

S
M
S



SHELTER MEDICINE SUPPORT

hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Who's Hiring in the Shelter Community?

- All shelters have medical services that need to be provided but not every shelter has the resources to provide medical services in house .
- A medical program's size or required veterinary hours is dependent on the number of animals that shelter intakes and houses as well as required state mandates that are imposed
- Community expectations for higher level of medical care for shelter animals are also a factor



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Who's Hiring in the Shelter Community?

- **Formula for self-sufficient medical program**
 - 1 veterinary hour/week for every 200-300 animals/year
 - 1 nursing hour/week for every 100-200 animals/year
- **Example: Shelter with 6,000 animals/year needs:**
 - Veterinarian for 20-30 hours per week
 - Nursing staff for 30-60 hours per week

hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Benefits to In-House Veterinary Care

- More efficient and cost effective
- Allows shelter to provide better care for the animals
- Improves image of the shelter in the community
- Needed to meet possible state mandates or veterinary practice act requirements (e.g. "depository" ruling in California)



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Challenges

- Dispelling negative perceptions about working in a shelter
- Historically low pay scale (although that is changing)
- A non-veterinarian administrator hiring and managing a veterinarian and other professional medical staff
- Providing a sufficient nursing staff so that the veterinarian is doing vet duties and not nursing tasks



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Challenges

- Common notion that all the shelter needs to do is hire a vet and not consider the entire program development
- Competition in availability for vets between shelters due to simple shortage in industry manpower needs
- Controlling the “burn out” factor – higher in shelter environment



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Getting Started – Define Goals

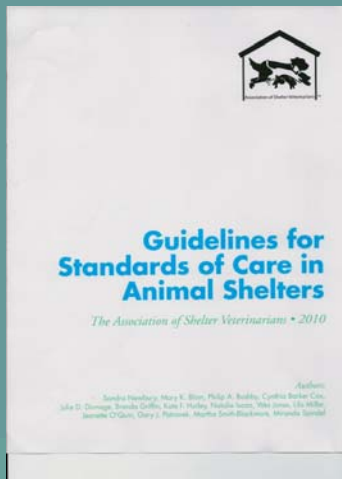
- What is your goal in hiring a veterinarian?
 - Improve medical care for shelter animals
 - Spay/neuter for shelter animals
 - HQHVSN for public
 - Public medicine component
- What scope of services do you plan to offer
 - Clinical, surgical, public medicine, vaccination clinic
- Difference between open vs. limited admission shelters



hsvma.org



GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Getting Started – Assess Resources

- Salary for veterinarian
- Sufficient support staff
- Physical space
- Equipment



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Getting Ready – Address Decision-Making

- Outline decision-making capability of the vet/medical program in overall shelter operations and management
- Will vet be part of the management team at the shelter
- Avoid utilizing the veterinarian as the “gatekeeper” – name “Dr. Death” often arises
- How much authority will vet have to make decisions regarding herd (population) health and euthanasia



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Getting Ready – Job Description

- Decide whether veterinarian will be employee or independent contractor
- Write a thorough job description
- Develop interview questions



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Recruiting

- Post jobs on websites with shelter industry audience
 - Association of Shelter Veterinarians – shelternet.org
 - Animal Sheltering website – animalsheltering.org
- Advertise in veterinary publications - *JAVMA*, *DVM Magazine*, *Veterinary Practice News*, newsletters of local and state veterinary medical associations
- Recruit from within – veterinarians volunteering at shelter
- Veterinarians in local community

hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Finding Your Match

- Have a good interview team
- Philosophical agreement important - shelter environment, open vs. limited admission, mission statement
- Offer working interviews and pay for time
- Recruit from veterinary schools/shelter internships and externship programs to “mold” your own shelter vet
- If all else fails, “steal” - use a professional recruiter



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Keeping Vets on Board - Retention

- Provide competitive salaries and benefits
- Be flexible about schedule
- Provide good support staff
- Opportunities to do more than spay/neuter if desired (physical fatigue factor)
- Opportunities to attend CE and participate in local VMAs
- Feel good factor important



hsvma.org



HIRING A SHELTER VETERINARIAN

Resources for Hiring a Shelter Veterinarian

- Hiring a Shelter Veterinarian (Q&A on the Koret Shelter Medicine Program website)
tinyurl.com/hiringvets
- Vetting Your Vets, Animal Sheltering Magazine
tinyurl.com/vettingvets
- Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Spay/Neuter Veterinarians
tinyurl.com/retainingvets

hsvma.org



Veterinary Partnerships with the Shelter Community



Gary Block DVM, MS, DACVIM

hsvma.org



PRIVATE VETS + SHELTERS = POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP FOR ANIMALS

- Potential to do great things together
- Potential for friction, miscommunication often hinders potential



hsvma.org



BUSINESS REALITIES

- Private practitioners are business owners
- In order to stay in business, we must make a profit. This allows us to pay bills, staff, overhead costs, etc.
- Veterinary medicine is not “recession-proof”
- Economic pressure on vets is increasing



hsvma.org



GENERAL PRACTITIONERS UNDER FINANCIAL STRESS

- Public less likely to pursue preventative care due to economic downturn
- Changing vaccine protocols=lost revenue
- Flea, tick and heartworm meds sold on-line, PetMeds and now OTC=lost revenue
- Large specialty hospitals increasing in number
- Public demanding referral sooner and more often
- Shelters expanding veterinary services to public

hsvma.org



SHEDDING MISCONCEPTIONS

- Vets and shelter community both guilty
- Too easy to assume and generalize
- Vets have tons of money and should be providing free or heavily discounted services to shelters
- Vets care more about their wallet than animals
- Vets think they understand the challenges of running a shelter
- Vets see shelters as just breeding grounds for infectious diseases
- Who's responsible for strays, turnovers and wildlife?



hsvma.org



MY 2¢

- Vets, veterinary staff and shelter workers are overworked, underpaid, and prone to burnout and compassion fatigue
- Problems arise when vets perceive an indifference or dismissing of their very real and legitimate financial concerns by the shelter community



hsvma.org



THE REAL DEAL

- With rare exceptions, both groups are passionately dedicated to doing the right thing for the animals
- Approaching vets with these facts in mind will set the stage for a constructive working environment



hsvma.org



CULTIVATING YOUR LOCAL GP

- Invite them over for a tour!
- Make them aware of any behavior classes taking place at the shelter
- If space is available, see if you can use the vet hospital for behavior classes, grief counseling session, “bully breed” classes, etc.
- Provide CE for vets on early age sterilization



hsvma.org



CULTIVATING YOUR LOCAL GP

- Try to have a single “point person” communicate with the local practitioner
- Ask GP if she wants you to provide any information to new pet adopters about her practice
- Buy them a book such as *Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters*
- Be cognizant of “hot button” issues affecting the profession and local vet community
- Avoid “mission creep” if possible
- Financial means testing for shelter services?

hsvma.org



CREATE “WIN-WIN” SITUATIONS

- Make new adopters aware of local GP for future veterinary care
- Ask local vet to be member of the shelter’s animal care committee
- See if local vet will provide a “coupon” for a post-adoption exam
- Approach any hospitals with interns
- Approach local vet school or vet tech school
- See if local practice has a new grad who needs surgery experience



hsvma.org



OTHER IDEAS

- See if local vet practices have turnover meds, samples or supplies they can donate to the shelter
- Check out “Shelter Medicine and Private Practice: Working Working Together for Shelter Pets,” free online at sheltermedicine.com/education/shelter-medicine-class-2011
- Contact state VMA executive director to get list of practices that offer reduced cost sterilization services avma.org/advocacy/state/vmas.asp

hsvma.org



MORE IDEAS

- Consider sponsoring legislation similar to NJ that allows vets to provide pro-bono services to shelters and rescue groups in exchange for reducing their CE requirements
- See if local vet hospitals will display photos and “bios” of animals available for adoption
- Be aware of every available funding source for veterinary care; Examples:
 - Maddie’s Fund
 - Allie Cat Allies
 - American Animal Hospital Association Helping Pets Fund
 - IMOM
 - PetSmart Charities
 - Breed rescue groups
 - State veterinary medical association programs

hsvma.org

COMPANION ANIMAL FOUNDATION
RIVMA

HOME
ABOUT CAF
NEWS & EVENTS
MAKE A DONATION
GRANT STORIES
GRANT GUIDELINES
FAQ
IN MEMORIAM
LINKS
FOR VETERINARIANS
CONTACT

WHAT IS CAF?
The RIVMA Companion Animal Foundation (CAF) was established in 2004 by the **Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association** to address a need that the veterinary community recognizes as imperative: to provide funds to care for the sick and injured pets of low-income pet owners.

NEWS & EVENTS
2010 RIVMA Golf Classic
The 2010 Golf Classic was a huge success! The tournament raised almost \$40,000, which will be used to offer financial assistance to low-income pet owners in Rhode Island. Thank you to everyone who participated and sponsored this event! Please save the date for the 8th Annual Golf Classic, which will be held on September 22, 2011. Please check back for details on how to register for next year's event!
[Click here to register](#)

DONATE NOW
SUPPORT OUR MISSION!

STAY INFORMED
SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTER

2011 CALENDARS AVAILABLE!
2011 CALENDAR

companionanimalfoundation.org



THANK YOU



Any questions?

hsvma.org