

BC SPCA launches vet-friendly website

Out with the old, in with the new BC SPCA website! We're proud to share that a special section on our new website has been curated just for you. Our veterinary resources page houses the latest updates in shelter medicine, program news within the BC SPCA, and resources for the continued development of veterinary teams across the province. Additionally, the page offers links to our "Veterinary Update" newsletter, a trusted source of information about animal medicine and the BC SPCA. We hope that this new online resource will be an invaluable tool in furthering our mission and the supportive work of B.C.'s veterinarians.

Learn more: spca.bc.ca/veterinarians



Introducing the BC SPCA AnimalKind Program

Have rodents, raccoons, birds or other unwanted wildlife ever moved into your home or clinic? Have you wondered how to solve the problem with as little harm as possible to the animals? The BC SPCA faces this situation each time we need rodent control in a shelter or respond to calls from the public asking about humane wildlife control options. All too often, we find ourselves providing care for animals hurt by harmful wildlife control methods (i.e. orphaned baby animals, birds stuck in glue traps).

To promote animal-friendly wildlife control, the BC SPCA joined with the UBC Animal Welfare Program to create AnimalKind, an animal welfare accreditation system for wildlife and rodent control (aka 'pest control'). Supported with funding from the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies and Vancouver Foundation, we developed evidence-based standards and a robust auditing program informed by academic and pest control industry feedback.

AnimalKind takes a preventative approach, requiring animal-friendly wildlife-proofing, and methods such as one-way doors and humane hazing, to encourage nuisance wildlife to leave voluntarily. For rodents, we recommend only certain types of traps and baits based on current research. Glue traps in homes and offices are unacceptable. AnimalKind certified companies and building managers will benefit from public recognition for their best practices in wildlife control, as well as referrals from the BC SPCA and our veterinary partners.

Visit animalkind.ca for more information.



Do you have questions or feedback for the BC SPCA?
Please email us at outreach@spca.bc.ca.

VETERINARY UPDATE

Dear British Columbia veterinarians, technicians, and assistants,

Summer is always an interesting time in veterinary practice and is especially interesting in shelter medicine. This year we have also been affected by the wildfires. Some branches and staff have evacuated or been under threat of evacuation and many shelters are accepting animals affected by the fires (directly or as transfers to make space in affected areas). Our staff and volunteers are assisting with rescue efforts in the field. For the first time in recent history, we opened a fully functional temporary shelter (in Prince George) to house owned dogs with guardians who were evacuated.

Due to kitten season, cats and kittens fill our shelters across the province, and we tend to see more infectious disease (such as panleukopenia and ringworm) associated with kittens as well as in shelters with higher intake.

We are particularly grateful at this time of year to the BC veterinarians who work tirelessly in partnership with us to support our efforts. We could not make it through the challenges of the summer without your help.

Since December 2016 we have seen an uptick in feline panleukopenia cases across the province with a large number of cases/deaths (20+) since mid-June concentrated mainly in the Interior but occurring in all regions. Most have occurred in animals too young to be fully vaccinated or animals exposed to the virus prior to entering our shelters. Usually the first sign of panleukopenia in a branch is the sudden unassisted death of a kitten 6-20 weeks (sometimes preceded by lethargy, inappetance, weight loss, vomiting, or diarrhea).

Historically we have relied on the Idexx canine parvo fecal snap test to diagnose these cases, both ante- and post-mortem. While not validated for cats (or for post-mortem use), their use is common and accepted in shelter medicine. We have recently noticed a higher than usual percentage of false negative tests (where panleukopenia is later confirmed on necropsy at the provincial animal health lab). We are still investigating this.

If one of our branches presents a suspect case, they will likely request a fecal parvo snap test and a CBC if the test is negative (and patient is alive). We have recently seen confirmed cases with normal or elevated WBC. Please handle these kittens as infectious and take precautions to protect your clinic or hospital.

Last, I wanted to share an explanation of our vaccine protocol to provide core shelter vaccines (FVRCP, DHPP, canine cough) starting at 6 weeks of age with boosters at three week intervals, and to vaccinate pregnant and lactating animals. Because shelters typically contain vulnerable animals from all different backgrounds, shelter animals are at much higher risk for infectious disease exposure than the average veterinary patient. We follow a modified version (starting at 6 weeks rather than 4 weeks, because we keep very young animals in foster homes) of the AAHA/AAFP shelter vaccination guidelines.

Despite robust vaccination and biosecurity protocols, we see hundreds of cases every year of diseases like panleukopenia, parvo, URI, and canine cough (typically brought in by animals incubating or shedding these illnesses without showing clinical signs). If you have any questions or wish to discuss our vaccine protocols, please reach out to me directly. I always love hearing from colleagues and am happy to discuss any concerns and share the latest on any infectious disease cases.



Thank you for your continued dedication and support,

Dr. Emilia Gordon
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BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

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The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) is a not-for-profit organization reliant on donations from the public.

Local veterinarian donates hospital to BC SPCA



Dr. Claudia Richter of Burnaby Veterinary Hospital has donated her business to the BC SPCA. Having achieved her goals of modernizing the hospital, gaining AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association) accreditation and creating a socially responsible business for both pets and community animals, the path forward was clear for Dr. Richter. She donated the clinic and is now increasing her focus on the direct care of the clients' pets as well as the animals under the care of the SPCA. Dr. Richter and her staff continue to work at the hospital.

Fear Free program brings hope to “scaredy” cats (and dogs)

As a veterinary practitioner, you've inevitably had your clients tell you how anxious their pet will feel when it comes time to visit you. Thanks to the Fear Free certification, this may soon be a thing of the past.

Founded by veterinarian Dr. Marty Becker and designed by 40+ animal care experts, the Fear Free certification is an online educational program for veterinary clinics aimed at removing fear and stress from animals' lives. Building on traditional veterinary training, Fear Free prioritizes emotional wellbeing alongside physical health as part of an animals' overall condition. The BC SPCA began implementation of Fear Free at all five of the society's veterinary facilities in May of 2017, and all new veterinary facilities will be designed around Fear Free principles to provide patients with positive spaces where they can feel comfortable. As a leader in animal welfare, the society hopes to use the Fear Free certification to set a province-wide example for how animals should be handled by pet care professionals and even their own families.

Mallory Gerwing, a veterinary technician at the BC SPCA Vancouver Animal Hospital, has seen the positive impact of Fear Free first hand. “One of our patients is a fearful Australian Shepherd mix who has always

been muzzled at previous vets,” she says. A large part of Fear Free is eliminating what causes stress to the animal, which for this dog seemed to be the building and vet staff. “With this dog, we did this by asking the guardian to keep the dog outside, unmuzzled, until the time of the appointment. We showed the guardian some non-invasive restraining techniques so they could replace the hands of an assistant, helping to put the dog at ease. With these steps we were able to complete a full exam outside with the owner present and the muzzle off. We are hoping with Fear Free methods, time and patience, the dog will learn that the vet isn't so scary.”

Because Fear Free prioritizes guardian education and moving at a pace that is comfortable for each animal, its implementation can mean longer appointments or even pushing less urgent issues until another time. However, staff at the BC SPCA clinics using the program have found the long-term benefits far outweigh the short-term challenges. Fear Free will increase client regularity and compliance, erase the negative association most have with veterinary visits, and most importantly, create a safe environment and happy experience for the animals.

Learn more and get certified at fearfreepets.com



Vets invited to apply for Dr. Carol Morgan Award

In honour of Dr. Carol Morgan, the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada has established the Dr. Carol Morgan Memorial Award, which will give out its first funds this year. Donations contributed to the fund will be used to honour Carol's dedication to the ethical practice of veterinary medicine to improve the welfare of all animals.

The Award is to be used for continued education and training-related costs in the areas of ethics and/or animal welfare for veterinarians working to increase the

application of these subjects within the profession broadly. The Award is open to any practicing veterinarian in Canada in good standing with their provincial veterinarian association. Applications for the Award are to be received by Oct 15th for courses to be taken in the following year, and are to be submitted by email to Sara Dubois, sdubois@spca.bc.ca.

Learn more at awfc.ca/grants/the-dr-carolmorgan-memorial-award

BC Vets form united front against cosmetic tail docking

The College of Veterinarians of B.C. voted in favour of a ban on cosmetic tail docking this past December, an exciting development that couldn't come fast enough for many concerned citizens and welfare experts. The historic decision follows a previous vote in favour of banning cosmetic ear cropping last year. Any veterinarian performing these procedures could now face animal cruelty charges under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

"We feel this is a big step forward in the humane treatment of animals in our province, and evidence that veterinarians in B.C. are interested in animal welfare first and foremost," says BC SPCA senior

manager of animal health Dr. Emilia Gordon. No scientific evidence supports a welfare or medical benefit for tail docking or alteration, but evidence does show a detrimental effect on behaviour and animal communication, as well as the risk for infection and phantom pain.

"Veterinarians in B.C. have advanced animal welfare in the province through this vote," says College President Dr. Brendan Matthews. B.C. now joins the four Atlantic provinces, and Quebec, in banning these cosmetic procedures. For more information contact the College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC) at 604-929-7090 or visit cvbc.ca.



The Future of Permanent ID



In North America, 1 in 3 pets go missing in their lifetime. BC SPCA shelters alone see thousands of lost or stray animals each year and due to the lack of registered permanent identification (ID), many of these animals are not reunited with their owners.

The BC Pet Registry (bcpetregistry.ca) was created to reverse this trend. Since its launch in 2015, over 40,000 pets have been registered with the online database and hundreds of veterinarians across the province are currently registering their clients.

With wildfires taking their toll on our province, permanent ID is as important as ever. This summer dozens of those affected by the wildfires took advantage of free registrations courtesy of the BC Pet Registry to ensure evacuated, temporarily rehomed, or sheltered pets could be reunited with their family.

Veterinary clinics and hospitals can join the BC Pet Registry free of charge to help identify lost or missing pets. Any microchip or tattoo can be registered with the BC Pet Registry, creating a centralized database for pets and owners across the globe.

With an easy-to-use online database that is available 24/7, the BC Pet Registry offers a new way to store your practice's tattoo logs and embrace the future of permanent ID.

Learn more about the BC Pet Registry by emailing info@bcpetregistry.ca or calling 1-855-622-7722.

The BC Pet Registry is an initiative of the BC SPCA, with all proceeds benefiting its lifesaving programs.

