

Rounds and monitoring: Cornerstones for health

Alexandre Ellis - DVM, University of Wisconsin Maddie's Shelter Medicine Resident,
University of Wisconsin Shelter Medicine Program

Vincent Paradis - DVM, University of Wisconsin/UC Davis Maddie's shelter medicine fellow,
Director of animal care Services Animaliers de la Rive-Sud

April 16th 2019

Daily rounds and daily monitoring of animals in our care are a simple, cost-effective way to increase the quality of care we provide as well as our life-saving ability. Sounds great doesn't it? But in a world where time is already a rare commodity, can we afford to add-on to staff and volunteers' daily workload?

Fear not! Daily monitoring and rounds might seem time consuming, but both are huge time-savers with invaluable upsides. You'll wonder how you had gone without them before! No matter what type of shelter you are, whether a municipal shelter, private shelter, a shelter with no on-site medical staff, improving your monitoring can improve your herd health.

Daily Monitoring

- Record essential daily care data
 - Appetite, stools, urine, cough, sneezing, vomiting, behavior, etc.
 - Track individual trends through an animal's stay
- Record at the same time as daily care and incorporate it in the daily routine
- Make it easy: Less than 1 minute per animal / day
 - Checklist for simplicity and efficiency (see additional resources below)
- Review logs regularly to ensure no animal is falling between the cracks

Daily Rounds

- Daily shelter walkthrough with select team of key staff members
 - Member of medical team, carestaff supervisor, adoptions manager, population manager, behavior personnel, etc.
 - Keep it not too big, but not too small → just the right size for efficiency in your shelter
- Eyes on each animal, every day, with every animal having a plan
 - Move to adoption, seek foster, seek transfer, etc.

Questions to ask every day

- **Who** are you?
- **What** are your needs from the shelter?
- **What** is holding you back?
- **What** is your plan today?
- **Who** is in charge?
- Delegate and communicate daily action steps to key staff members

Benefits

- Faster disease recognition and response.
- Animals can easily be fast-tracked through the shelter.
- No animal left behind with unmet/unrecognized needs.
- Improved inter-department communication and cohesion within the shelter
 - No-need to constantly track down staff for simple questions
 - Easier to describe a particular problem to outside (or internal) veterinarian if needed
 - Overall time-saver!!
- Helps establish common, simple protocols based on monitoring
 - E.g. when to alert medical staff for diarrhea, inappetence, no stools, etc.
- Easy, daily monitoring of overall population and Capacity for Care
 - Allows quick response to unexpected events: Adoption specials, intake reduction, etc.

How to get started

- **Provide the tools to succeed:** Provide a simple, easy template
 - Stay flexible and ready to adapt it to your situation.
- **Communication, communication, communication:** Provide training, support and oversight when getting started
 - Explain why these changes are happening and how it will affect your population and staff's day-to-day.
 - Review logs daily, listen to and work through staff concerns.
- **Consistency is the key:** Have a set time, every day, with the same staff.
 - It is better to have a smaller group do rounds on a given day than to cancel.
- **Start small if needed :** animals in medical wards / isolation
 - Work out the kinks and apply to whole population
- **Celebrate the successes!**
 - Whether it's staff buying into the new system or examples of animals moving through faster, share the positive feedback with your staff and volunteers. It's the reason we all do this!

Additional resources

Daily rounds: <https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/daily-shelter-rounds>

Monitoring: <https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/instructions-for-daily-monitoring-of-animal-health-and-behavior>