March 14, 2020

Dear Clients, Donors, Friends and Community Partners,

On behalf of the Monroe County Humane Association, I want to assure you that we’re monitoring the developing situation regarding COVID-19 coronavirus. We realize that our services are essential to our community’s health, safety and wellbeing. Our top priority will be to the health of our clients, staff, volunteers and patients. As new information continues to become available, we will continue to adapt our response to any new conditions.

We are dedicated to our community and we realize that the effects of this virus on our community will mean that more will find it hard to pay for veterinary services and their pet food and supply needs. While appointments are limited, pets in need of emergency services for injury or illness for clients facing immediate financial hardship or with proof of their participation in a government assistance program will be prioritized over general wellness care.

Our response plan includes the following changes:

• The Administration and Education office at 3410 South Walnut is available by appointment only, until further notice. Staff will continue to address the care of on-site animal ambassadors, donation collection and respond to voicemails and emails.
• All Board of Director and Committee meetings have been moved to virtual meetings via video or teleconference.
• Tails on the Town, currently scheduled for Saturday, April 18, is currently postponed with more information coming soon regarding this event.
• Several events and volunteer opportunities have been canceled or postponed. For details regarding therapy animal opportunities, please email sgroschwitz@monroehumane.org. For information on postponed events, please email kgoy@monroehumane.org.
• Any staff or volunteers that are sick are encouraged to stay home. This may mean we are operating on reduced staff and volunteers. Please be patient while we work to return voicemails and emails.
• The Nonprofit Veterinary Clinic and Outreach Center will need to reschedule any nonessential wellness appointments. Walk-in services (microchipping, nail trims, or anal gland expressions) will not be available until further notice.
• Staff will be cleaning community surfaces more regularly throughout the day.
• If you are a client and are sick, please reschedule your appointment or ask for the help of a neighbor or friend to get support for your pet. Face masks cannot be made available under any circumstances.
• Food pantry services are available to current and new clients. For Monroe County residents, pets must be spayed/neutered and have a current rabies vaccine. Food pantry clients must be able to show proof of immediate financial hardship or proof of participation in a state-funded assistance program.

We will continue to monitor the situation. We hope you, your loved ones and pets remain safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Warren, Executive Director
Can COVID-19 infect pets?
There is no evidence that pets can become sick. Infectious disease experts, as well as the CDC, OIE, and WHO, indicate there is no evidence to suggest that pet dogs or cats can be a source of infection, including spreading COVID-19 to people. However, because animals can spread other diseases to people and people can also spread diseases to animals, it’s a good idea to always wash your hands before and after interacting with animals.

If I am ill with COVID-19 are there special precautions I should take to prevent spreading disease, including when caring for my pet?
Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. So, if you are ill with COVID-19, have another member of your household take care of walking, feeding, and playing with your pet. If you have a service animal or you must care for your pet, then wear a facemask; don’t share food, kiss, or hug them; and wash your hands before and after any contact with your pet or service animal. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. While we are recommending these as good practices, it is important to remember there is currently no evidence that pets can spread COVID-19 to other animals, including people.

Is testing for SARS-CoV-2 available for animals in the United States?
No clinical testing is available as of today (3/11/2020) in the United States, but tests and testing capacity are being developed. It is possible that authorization may need to be obtained from a public health or state veterinarian prior to submission of samples.

My pet or service animal needs to go to the veterinarian – what should I do?
If you are not ill with COVID-19 or another communicable disease (e.g., cold, flu), call your veterinarian to make an appointment for your pet or service animal as you normally would. If you are sick with COVID-19 or another communicable disease, you should stay at home and minimize contact with other people until you are well. Accordingly, if this is a non-urgent appointment that needs to be scheduled for your pet or service animal (e.g., annual wellness examination, routine vaccination, elective surgery), you should wait to schedule that appointment until your physician and public health office believe you no longer present a risk of transmitting your infection. If you are sick with COVID-19, and you believe your pet or service animal is ill, please seek assistance from your veterinarian and public health officials to determine how to best ensure your pet or service animal can be appropriately cared for while minimizing risks of transmitting COVID-19 to other people.