

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **TACOMA ANIMAL SHELTER FACES LIMITED SPACE AND RESOURCES WHILE WORKING TO CONTAIN CANINE UPPER RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES**

*The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County is in urgent need of support from the community with stray/lost pets, adoptions, fosters, and donations.*

TACOMA, WA – Starting mid-May, over 15 dogs have shown signs of upper respiratory illness at the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County.

The dogs are experiencing mild symptoms associated with kennel cough to more severe symptoms linked to canine pneumovirus. Symptoms include but are not limited to coughing, discharge from the eyes or nose, and abnormal breathing.

The shelter has been quarantining affected dogs and following proper procedures outlined by the shelter's veterinary team.

"Upper respiratory illness is common especially in shelter environments when kennels are crowded," says Dr. Jennifer Bennett, chief veterinary officer at the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County. "The best way to prevent the spread of the disease is through daily observation for signs of disease, treating early, isolating animals with more intensive care needs, and reducing the number of animals at the shelter. With our very limited and outdated facility, we are running out of much needed quarantine space."

In December 2022, the shelter implemented an [appointment-based intake system](#) in alignment with guidelines from veterinary experts and nationally recognized disease control best practices. This system helps to lessen the high volume of animals at the shelter at one time.

"This appointment-based intake system has proven to be effective in minimizing the spread of illness in the shelter environment," explains Dr. Bennett. "However, we often have a large number of animals in urgent need brought to us from animal control, which continues to put a strain on our limited space and resources."

As part of the shelter's appointment-based system to help with space, the community is asked to please take the following steps when finding a lost pet:

1. Provide the pet with a temporary home, if possible.
2. Walk the dog around the area – most dogs don't wander far from home!
3. Have the pet scanned for a microchip at your local veterinary clinic.
4. Post online and put up signage around your community to help locate the owners.
5. Call the shelter to give our staff a description of the pet for it to be included in our found pet records.

Information on what to do when finding a lost pet and how keeping a lost pet out of a shelter environment is most ideal can be found at [www.thehumanesociety.org/lost-pets](http://www.thehumanesociety.org/lost-pets).

The community can help by opening up their homes to a pet in need by adopting. The shelter currently has over 45 adoptable dogs waiting for a loving home. To help boost adoptions, adoption fees will be \$50 for all adult dogs 2 years old and older from June 2 - 16.

All available pets have been examined by shelter staff and are ready for adoption. To view all adoptable shelter pets, please visit [www.thehumanesociety.org/adopt](http://www.thehumanesociety.org/adopt).

Not looking to adopt? Foster homes are urgently needed to help care for the dogs currently receiving treatment as well as for the many healthy shelter pets waiting to be adopted to help clear up space. More information about fostering can be found at <https://www.thehumanesociety.org/get-involved/foster/>.

The community can also help by donating to support the shelter's lifesaving medical efforts and to continue caring for the many pets in need: [www.thehumanesociety.org/donate](http://www.thehumanesociety.org/donate).

#### **About the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County**

As one of the oldest animal welfare organizations in the nation, the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County cares for around 10,000 animals every year and maintains multiple humane programs. Dedicated to "Making Happy Happen," the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County works tirelessly to protect animals, support pet owners, and enhance relationships between animals and people. Learn more at [www.thehumanesociety.org](http://www.thehumanesociety.org).

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