



Animal Welfare & Non-Profit Organizations

Massachusetts has an incredible history of advocating for the welfare of animals. The MSPCA was founded in 1868 and a year later Massachusetts was the first state to pass anti-cruelty legislation. Our partners in animal welfare have made vast improvements in the lives of animals in the Commonwealth.

For many years in Massachusetts, the veterinary community has worked with the animal sheltering community to promote animal welfare. In other states, relationships between non-profit animal rescues and veterinarians have been strained. Some of these relationships have become so dysfunctional that legislation has been passed to limit the reach of non-profit groups.

It is the goal of the MVMA to continue our long held tradition of having healthy, positive relationships between non-profit animal groups and the veterinary community.

In general, the veterinary community provides care to owned animals, specifically clients with the means to pay for veterinary care. Animal rescue groups generally provide care to un-owned animals, animals that are either stray or that have been surrendered by their owners to a humane society. Over the past few years, the scope of non-profits has expanded such that some offer veterinary care to owned animals. This is often the spark that has ignited the ill will between the two groups.

The veterinary community acknowledges that there is a large group of animal owners that do not have the means to afford traditional veterinary care. We see these clients when they come into our clinics for the first time with an emergency and not even enough money to cover the exam fee. Or, perhaps we do not see these clients because we tell them they cannot make an appointment without the minimal exam fee.

There is without a doubt, a segment of animal owners who need subsidized veterinary care. The veterinary community is thankful that there are non-profits that are funded by grants, donations, or municipal funding to care for animals whose owners cannot afford traditional care.

The MVMA would encourage non-profits who aim to provide care to owned animals to follow the blueprint of Tufts at Tech. This non-profit clinic sought the input of surrounding vets at the initial stages of the clinic, formed an advisor board, and established definitive criteria for patient selection. Tufts at Tech has become an incredible resource for veterinarians, animal shelters, and animal control officers.

The MVMA welcomes any group or organization to discuss how the non-profit sector can work together with the veterinary community to assist animals in need.