

### How We Make Medical Decisions for Non-Routine Care

As a true no-kill partner in Austin, APA! makes medical decisions differently from private vets. *Our priority is to save the life of every treatable, homeless dog or cat using the resources we have.* This differs from “gold standard” medical care at private vet clinics, but is necessary so that no homeless animals are left behind to die.

#### **Our resources are not limitless**

If we are to rescue as many cats and dogs at risk of needless euthanasia as possible, we must steward our resources carefully.

Our vets use their brains and their hands (physical exam and history), then treat for the most likely causes of illness. If treatment for the top causes is not effective, we treat for the next most common causes. Non-life-threatening or significantly painful conditions therefore may take longer to treat than if extensive testing were done up front. This saves us valuable time and money which is used to save more lives.

#### **What types of conditions must we prioritize treating?**

- ❖ We treat life-threatening conditions
- ❖ We alleviate pain
- ❖ We cure conditions that will lead to long-term pain
- ❖ We immediately treat conditions that will get worse if we don't act quickly
- ❖ We treat conditions that will likely prevent an animal from being adopted
- ❖ We use affordable medications, avoiding expensive first-line medications

#### **What types of procedures must we go without?**

- ❖ Blood Work Monitoring
- ❖ Wellness checks
- ❖ Tests (X-Rays, Ultrasound, Bloodwork, MRI) if results would not change treatment plan
- ❖ Cosmetic Surgery (benign mass removals)
- ❖ Dentals if not painful
- ❖ 3-injection heartworm treatment, Apoquel (gold standard treatments)

#### **Which treatments may take extra time?**

If an animal has a condition that is not immediately life-threatening and requires more resources than our medical budget can cover, Austin Pets Alive! will spend some time in:

- ❖ Crowdfunding to raise money for treatment
- ❖ Finding a specialty vet willing to donate care
- ❖ Referring to a partner clinic for a paid consultation
- ❖ Posting to other veterinarians/specialists for advice
- ❖ Finding a lower cost solution

Austin Pets Alive! constantly strives to expand available resources, but we also must keep our no-kill model sustainable. **As a general rule, we aim for what an animal-lover of average means could reasonably provide.** Until every dog and cat is safe from needlessly being killed, we cannot afford gold-standard medicine.