



6781 San Casa Drive, Englewood, FL 34224

www.humane.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

1/25/2011

Contact: Phil Snyder

Executive Director

941-474-7884

Suncoast Humane Society to Vaccinate Against Canine Influenza

Suncoast Humane Society is a recipient of the canine influenza "Building Community Immunity Grant" from Petfinder.com Foundation and Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health. A total of 560 vaccines were donated, which will be administered to all adoptable canines at Suncoast's Animal Care Center, beginning January 25th. "This is just one more precaution we are taking to ensure the health and safety of animals in our care. New pet owners can rest assured that we are safeguarding all adopted canines against this illness," stated Phil Snyder, Executive Director.

Canine influenza is a respiratory disease that causes coughing, nasal discharge, and loss of energy and appetite. The signs of infection are similar to those of other respiratory diseases in dogs, but the coughing caused by canine influenza can last for several weeks. With proper care, most dogs generally recover. However, canine influenza can lead to more severe or even life-threatening infections, such as pneumonia, and has been fatal in up to 8% of cases. Because canine influenza is caused by a relatively new virus, dogs have no natural immunity to it. And because it is not seasonal, it can strike at any time, like other respiratory diseases.

Highly contagious, canine influenza has been confirmed in 34 states to date. It spreads readily from dog to dog, so outbreaks usually occur in multi-dog settings such as shelters and rescues, boarding facilities, doggie daycares, dog parks, and groomers. Making things more difficult is the fact that dogs can spread the virus well before the coughing and other signs of sickness even appear. Without knowing it, animal care workers in these settings can carry the virus home and infect their own dogs.

The vaccine will be administered to all canines adopted from Suncoast Humane Society. A booster is given 2-4 weeks following the initial vaccination and depending on how quickly a dog is adopted, the new owner may need to return to the shelter within one or two weeks. "We are taking a leadership role within the community by putting forth an effective vaccination campaign. It is our responsibility to care for the homeless animals in our area, and it a responsibility we take seriously," stated Phil Snyder, Executive Director.

Now celebrating its fortieth year, Suncoast Humane Society is proud to help animals and people throughout Southwest Florida. In 2010 alone, they served more than 37,000 animals and people through their programs and services including, Humane Education and Outreach, the Preventive Health Clinic, Adoptions, Foster Care, Lost and Found services, three Thrift Stores and the Pet Pantry, which helps families in need care for their pets. To contact Suncoast Humane Society, please call 941-474-7884 or visit www.humane.org.