

Mark Irwin, DVM
President, Jefferson County Veterinary Medical Society
315-783-6658

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Jennifer Risser, DVM
Vice President, JCVMS
315-778-7109

Rebecca Reynolds, DVM
Secretary, JCVMS
315-788-1711

Veterinarians Advocate for Jefferson County Dog Control and Urge Dog Owners to Ensure they have the Desired Service

The Jefferson County Veterinary Medical Society (JCVMS) is the primary organization for all veterinarians living in or providing veterinary services in Jefferson County, NY.

As veterinarians, we have an ethical obligation to act in the interest of animal welfare and on behalf of pets, pet owners and veterinary staff. For decades, Jefferson County Dog Control has provided professional dog control services for residents and their pets. Eight municipalities have withdrawn from the County service. The JCVMS believes having a strong centralized service for the county is essential to meeting the expectations of the animal lovers and dog owners of our county.

Closure of County Dog Control will result in a patchwork of services with:

- Prolonged and varied response times
- Rescued or stray dogs being directly removed from the County. It is not uncommon for dogs to become separated from their families, so the JCVMS believes that it is important to have stray dogs kept within the county to facilitate their return to their families
- Funds being directed to other counties and not reinvested in Jefferson County
- The public reaching out to the SPCA and local veterinarians when they are unaware of who may find and hold their dog
- Questionable facilities available to provide housing to canine victims of cruelty and abuse.
- Some towns having no animal cruelty investigator.

Additionally, the JCVMS believes that there will be problems resulting from:

- No municipality participation in the Jefferson County Animal Response Team (JCART)
- Inconsistent and confusing coverage as Jefferson County Dog Control will only service some areas of the county as towns opt out of the service. County Dispatch may not know who to contact, delaying responses to emergencies such as vehicular crashes with dogs as passengers. Members of the public may not know who to contact or where to go to retrieve a lost pet
- Provision of emergency services by individual contractors may be limited with inconsistent payment of emergency veterinary fees
- No involvement of individual contractors in animal cruelty cases, animal hoarding situations, etc. Also, funds may be limited in any of these cases to only what the individual towns can afford to prosecute and hold animals for evidence
- The discontinuation Dog Control's collaboration with Public Health for rabies control activities. Rabies is a real concern to people and animals in this area and this will be a very difficult service for individual contractors to provide
- Difficulty in finding available contractors to adequately provide coverage of every town and municipality.

Jefferson County Dog Control provides a mechanism through which updated services, fee structure and specific services can be modified to fit defined, clear expectations and the model needs to be efficient, effective and affordable. Pet owners should contact their town representatives to ensure that their municipality will have the services they desire. The veterinarians of Jefferson County urge our municipalities to maintain a central dog control service for the entirety of Jefferson County which optimizes efficiencies and provides the quality and consistency of service that pet owners have come to expect.