

✓ BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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Village Oak Veterinary Hospital
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Board of Supervisors
1010 10th St. Ste 6500
Modesto, CA 95354

June 29, 2011

Dear Chairman Monteith,

Regarding the June 1st, 2011, letter from Stanislaus Animal Services to Stanislaus County Veterinarians:

I have been involved in the Stanislaus veterinary community since 1975. For as long as I can remember the local veterinary community has struggled with the animal overpopulation problem in our area. This is not just a local problem but a national embarrassment. Low cost (or free) spay /neuters were sponsored by local veterinarians many years ago at the Veterinary Emergency Hospital on Prescott with little impact. Many of us participated in the Maddies Fund Program (low to no cost spay & neuter of cats), which had some effect, but unfortunately, once it ended, populations climbed again.

College Veterinary Hospital and Village Oak Veterinary Hospital have participated in the SCATE Program since it began. We have seen some of our regular clients who were already planning to alter their pets take advantage of this program, but we have also seen some pets whose only veterinary experience (their spay or neuter) was because of the SCATE program. Some of the SCATE vouchers likely were used to spay and neuter pets who would not otherwise been altered, though enforcement of the license fee differential is a substantial driving force to getting these dogs altered.

The initial SCATE fee structure was negotiated by county representatives and veterinarians and re-negotiated jointly in 2007. The county did not request any input from local veterinarians regarding this new fee structure. If they had sought our input, they would have realized that calling it compensation is incorrect. By definition, to compensate participating veterinarians for SCATE services, the county would need to provide an amount equivalent to the veterinarian's expense. The current proposed schedule would require veterinarians to provide service at a loss, which in this difficult economy, would be a poor business decision. I realize government agencies can work at a loss, how else in these challenging times can "the organization be committed to provide a new level of services with fewer resources."

Since there was no contact with local veterinarians, we are forced to speculate as to the true intent of the current proposed fees effective July 1:

- Make the fees so low, that local veterinarians decline to participate, causing the program to fail because the veterinary community cannot afford to participate.
- This is truly the most the county can afford and still provide the same number of vouchers.
- Justify expanding the taxpayer subsidized shelter spay/neuter clinic to provide service for everyone.
- The shelter has changed the fee structure to create a new revenue source.

Perhaps if the "relationship" Director Patton suggests truly did exist between the local veterinarians and the shelter, we would not feel the need to speculate.

I have spoken with many veterinary clinics about this new fee structure. Some practices had not received a letter, and had no idea what I was talking about. Others were torn: they wanted to support the program, but financially could not afford to participate. Still others were trying to figure out how they could attach additional services to the vouchers to generate profit.

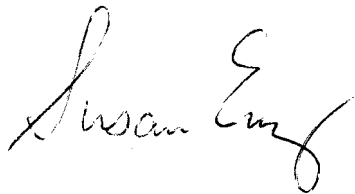
The county has continued to spend tax-payer money on this program for nearly a decade with no apparent effect. Perhaps it is time to eliminate this program, and redirect this money towards enforcement.

I have taken the time to compare some of the low-cost spay/neuter prices in our county, and have enclosed three charts. These charts do not represent all of the spay/neuter efforts in our community, but they represent a few. Project X, a private, veterinary supported, non-taxpayer subsidized program is actively altering local dogs and cats. This program is competitively priced and has spayed and neutered over 10,000 animals to date in private practices throughout the county.

Project X is represented by Monte Vista Veterinary Hospital in Turlock, Community Veterinary Hospital in Turlock, Waterford Veterinary Hospital in Waterford, G-N Veterinary Hospital in Newman, Salida Veterinary Hospital in Salida, Coffee Road Veterinary Hospital in Modesto, Village Oak Veterinary Hospital in Modesto, Manteca Veterinary Hospital in Manteca, College Veterinary Hospital in Modesto, River Oak Veterinary Hospital in Riverbank and Crows Landing Veterinary Hospital in Modesto.

We respectfully request Director Patton be encouraged to reconsider this new direction, use Animal Services to enforce current regulations, and discuss with the Veterinary Community how best to increase the total numbers of surgeries done in our county – not just how to shift these surgeries onto the taxpayer's bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Enz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a long, sweeping underline.

Susan Enz, Business Owner

Village Oak Veterinary Hospital

STANISLAUS ANIMAL SERVICES AGENCY

"SERVING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER"

Annette Patton 3647 Comucopia Way
Executive Director Modesto CA 95358

Phone: 209.558.7387 Fax: 209.558.2138
www.stancounty.com/animalservices

June 1, 2011

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine:

The program known as the Stanislaus County Alternative to Euthanasia (SCATE) program has been in existence since December 2003. Stanislaus County offered this subsidized voucher program to spay and neuter dogs and cats in the local community.

In these challenging economic times, the organization is committed to provide a new level of services with fewer resources. The SCATE program is one of the many services evaluated for cost savings and future funding, and will continue to be evaluated on a year to year basis.

The SCATE program will continue through the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 with modifications. The fee schedule that compensates participating veterinarians for providing the SCATE services will be modified for any surgeries performed as of **July 1, 2011**.

The new prices commence July 1, 2011:

Spay and Neuter	Fee Reimbursement	Current
Male Cat	\$30	52.00
Female Cat	\$40	100.00
Male Dog Neuter	\$50	110.00
Female Dog Spay < 65 lbs	\$70	173.00
Female Dog Spay >65 lbs.	\$85	224.00

134.00

We encourage your continued participation in the SCATE program in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2011-2012. We look forward to continuing our relationships and forming new relationships with those veterinarians that have not been a part of this program previously.

Please contact us direct at 342-1745 with a response to continue participation in this valuable program by June 28, 2011. No response is necessary if you decline. We thank you and appreciate your ongoing commitment to spay and neuter within the community.

Sincerely,

Annette Patton

Annette Patton
Executive Director
Stanislaus Animal Services Agency.



	SCATE VOUCHER			SAVED FEES	PROJECT X	TURLOCK
						SPAY/NEUTER
	Current Cost Of SCATE Vouchers	Current Veterinary Reimbursement	New Veterinary Reimbursement			
Female Dogs 25#	\$140.00	\$173.00	\$70.00		\$134.00	\$120.00
Female Dogs Low Inc 25#	\$72.00	\$173.00	\$70.00	\$85.00	\$90.00	\$120.00
Female Dogs Ultra Low Inc 25#	\$72.00	\$173.00	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$90.00	\$120.00
Female Dogs 65#	\$140.00	\$224.00	\$85.00		\$173.00	\$150.00
Female Dogs 65# Low Income	\$72.00	\$224.00	\$85.00	\$120.00	\$125.00	\$150.00
Female Dog 65# Ultra Low Inc	\$72.00	\$224.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$125.00	\$150.00
Female Dog 90#	\$140.00	\$224.00	\$85.00		\$224.00	\$150.00
Female Dog 90# Low Income	\$72.00	\$224.00	\$85.00	\$120.00	\$150.00	\$150.00
Female Dog 90# Ultra Low Inc	\$72.00	\$224.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$150.00	\$150.00

TURLOCK

SCATE VOUCHER

SAVED FEES

Project X

SPAY/NEUTER

	Current Cost Of SCATE Vouchers	Current Veterinary Reimbursement	New Veterinary Reimbursement			
Male Dog 25#s	\$140.00	\$110.00	\$50.00		\$98.00	\$90.00
Male Dog 25# Low Income	\$72.00	\$110.00	\$50.00	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$90.00
Male Dog 25#Ultra Low Inc	\$72.00	\$110.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$65.00	\$90.00
Male Dog 65#	\$140.00	\$134.00	\$50.00		\$110.00	\$110.00
Male Dog 65# Low Income	\$72.00	\$134.00	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$73.00	\$110.00
Male Dog 65# Ultra Low Inc	\$72.00	\$134.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$73.00	\$110.00
Male Dog 90#s	\$140.00	\$134.00	\$50.00		\$130.00	\$110.00
Male Dog 90# Low Income	\$72.00	\$134.00	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$93.00	\$110.00
Male Dog 90# Ultra Low Inc	\$72.00	\$134.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$93.00	\$110.00

	SCATE VOUCHER			SAVED	PROJECT X	Alley Cat Guard	Turlock Spay/Neut
	Current Cost Of SCATE Vouchers	Current Veterinary Reimbursement	New Veterinary Reimbursement				
Male Cats	\$72.00	\$52.00	\$30.00		\$40.00	\$30.00	\$40.00
Male Cats Low Inc	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$30.00	\$35.00	\$30.00		\$40.00
Ultra-Low Cats Neut				\$30.00			
Female Cats	\$113.00	\$100.00	\$40.00		\$72.00	\$40.00	\$60.00
Female Cats Low Inc	\$63.00	\$100.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$60.00		\$60.00
Ultra-Low Cats Spay				\$40.00			additional fees if pregnant
Feral Cat Neuter				\$30.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	
Feral Cat Spay				\$40.00	\$50.00	\$20.00	