

# **Toronto Humane Society Shelter Medicine**

## **Rotation Information Package**

Updated May 26, 2021 – KW

Updated Sept 21 2021- DB

Updated Dec 13<sup>th</sup> 2021 – RF

Updated July 27, 2023 – KW staffing

### **General Information:**

#### **Oversight (are subject to change over time):**

Dr. Laura Balanoff (Staff Veterinarian, Interim Curriculum Organizer)

Dr. Danielle Boes (Staff Veterinarian, Shelter Medicine Rotation Curriculum Organizer)

Dr. Karen Ward (Chief Veterinary Officer)

Dr. Linda Jacobson (Senior Manager, Shelter Medicine Advancement)

#### **Main contacts for rotation information:**

Dr. Danielle Boes, Rotation Curriculum Organizer, [dboes@torontohumanesociety.com](mailto:dboes@torontohumanesociety.com)

Dr. Laura Balanoff, Interim Curriculum Organizer [lbalanoff@torontohumanesociety.com](mailto:lbalanoff@torontohumanesociety.com)

Ms. Rachel Fortin RVT, Rotation Scheduler, [rfortin@torontohumanesociety.com](mailto:rfortin@torontohumanesociety.com)

Dr. Karen Ward, Chief Veterinary Officer, [kward@torontohumanesociety.com](mailto:kward@torontohumanesociety.com)

Sheltering and accessible community medicine are dynamic, and the student schedules as listed below may not be representative of what services the students will actually be scheduled for. The overall goal of the rotation at THS is to provide well rounded exposure to shelter medicine and accessible community medicine, while still meeting the needs of our shelter and community. There will be opportunities for surgical experience however this is not the main focus of the rotation at THS. Students wanting a rotation experience with a mostly surgical focus and a large amount of surgery time should consider an alternative placement.

#### **Shelter address:**

11 River St.

Toronto ON

M5A 4C2

Located at the corner of Queen St. East and River St.

In the neighbourhood of Corktown and Regent Park

#### **Rotation duration:**

Varies from 1 day to 2-week placements depending on the availability and needs of the student and shelter capacity.

**Dates available:**

January to April and September to December

During the summer months with kitten season, the shelter gets extremely busy. Rotations scheduled outside of May-Aug are best to allow time to properly mentor students.

**Student numbers:**

Ideal to have 2 students at a time per rotation. Exceptions will be considered for single student placement on a case by case basis.

**First day info:**

Please arrive to the front doors of the shelter (on River St) at the scheduled time which will be relayed in advance to the student depending on the service. If it is before 11am, the front doors will be locked still. You can contact a supervisor at 416-392-2273 x 2190 to be let in. The supervisor will show you to the vet's office where you will meet the vet you are on service with that day. Morning rounds start at 10am each day.

The shelter is easily accessible by public transport and there is a THS parking lot behind the shelter. Parking is free there, but it is first come first serve and can fill up quickly. Be sure to read signage before parking to avoid a parking ticket.

**Accommodations:**

If accommodations are needed in the city, students can consider:

- Renting an Airbnb or other short-term rental
- Booking a hotel room. Hotwire sometimes has deals on their website
- Staying with friends or family member(s)

**Rotation description:**

Open to all veterinary students along with veterinary interns who would like to gain more exposure to and are interested in animal welfare, shelter medicine and community veterinary practice.

**Rotation goals:**

1. Broad overview of shelter medicine, its challenges and rewards
2. Exposure to a busy, well-resourced shelter with capacity for extensive surgical and medical case management
3. Understanding how sheltering best practices improve health, welfare, length of stay and life-saving capacity
4. Exposure to population management and pathway planning in shelters
5. Exposure to common medical and behavioural reasons for relinquishment and how to manage them in an animal shelter
6. Understanding the roles of both shelter veterinarians and private practice veterinarians in creating a humane society
7. Exposure to accessible public veterinary care

**Rotation components:**

1. INTAKE
  - a. All animals arriving at the shelter receive a complete physical exam, assessment, intake procedures and pathway plan
  - b. Includes foster exams, newly adopted, strays, emergencies, surrenders and transfers
2. FELINE MEDICINE
  - a. All medicine shifts include:
    - i. Rounds
    - ii. Case work up and management
    - iii. Full in house lab including fungal culture lab, digital radiography, ultrasound
    - iv. Assessment and interpretation of diagnostics
    - v. Infectious disease prevention and management
    - vi. Population management
3. SPECIAL SPECIES MEDICINE
4. CANINE MEDICINE
5. HIGH-VOLUME-HIGH-QUALITY SPAY-NEUTER SURGERY
  - a. Based on the Humane Alliance model
  - b. Services a combination of owned animals, rescue and shelter animals
  - c. 5,600 spay/neuter surgeries performed in 2018
6. SHELTER SURGERY
  - a. A wide variety of surgical procedures, including but not limited to
    - i. Feline and canine (both pediatric and adult) spay and neuter
    - ii. Rabbit spays/neuters and dentals
    - iii. Feline and canine dentistry including digital dental radiography
    - iv. Gastrotomy, enterotomy
    - v. Cystotomy
    - vi. Mass removals
    - vii. Amputations

- viii. FHO
  - ix. Enucleation, cherry eye repair, entropion/ectropion correction
- 7. PUBLIC VETERINARY SERVICES
  - a. Vaccinations, wellness exams and blood work, pre-surgical and pre-dental consultations, owner-requested euthanasias, post-operative concerns, amongst others
- 8. CANINE TRAINING DEPARTMENT
  - a. Public training classes, shelter training classes, behaviour modification plans
  - b. In-shelter enrichment plans
  - c. Most of our trainers are CPDT-KA certified, or tracking towards certification
- 9. FELINE TRAINING DEPARTMENT
  - a. In-shelter and foster home training and enrichment plans, behaviour modification
  - b. Department led by Dr. Jacklyn Ellis, Animal Behaviour Scientist
  - c. Managing litterbox concerns, including inappropriate urination & defecation
- 10. LABORATORY
  - a. Exposure to our in-house IDEXX lab with dedicated RVT; CBC, Chemistries, cytology, fecals, urinalysis, fungal cultures
- 11. ADOPTIONS
  - a. New hire presentation on “Adopters Welcome”

**\*\*NOTE:** Participation in some of the above components will be based on time allowance and shelter capacity. Longer placements will allow for exposure to more of the components.

## **Resources to review prior to the rotation:**

**Please watch the following videos:**

- The first 60 minutes webinar by Dr. Brian DiGangi
  - <https://www.maddiesfund.org/the-first-60-minutes-webcast.htm>
- Flow through planning webinar by Dr. Elizabeth Berliner
  - <https://www.maddiesfund.org/in-one-door-and-out-the-other.htm>
- Making the case for a paradigm shift in community cat management by Dr. Kate Hurley
  - <https://www.maddiesfund.org/making-the-case-for-community-cats-part-one.htmaksfkdsaj>
- RAVS basic surgery skills practice videos:
  - [http://www.ruralareavet.org/training\\_av.php](http://www.ruralareavet.org/training_av.php)
- ASPCA Humane Alliance youtube videos:
  - Pedicle ties: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scutiRrHtQI>
  - Puppy scrotal neuter: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqwLHiSnboQ>
  - Modified miller’s knot (aka “strangle knot” per ASPCA): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUJR5zj2Pyo>
  - Incision placement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9Z0pr2xBsQ>
  - Spay hook use: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_6HNz6RzMRE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6HNz6RzMRE)

**Please browse and be familiar with generally (don't need to study/memorize these documents!):**

- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters
  - <https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf>
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) Spay – Neuter Guidelines
  - <https://avmajournals.avma.org/doi/pdf/10.2460/javma.249.2.165Jshgfkas>
- Toronto Humane Society Protocols on Dropbox. Students will be given access given email to the THS Dropbox files. Please browse/be familiar with the following protocols in order of importance:
  - Vaccination protocols
  - URI
  - Kennel cough
  - Diarrhea (acute)
  - Kitten protocols
  - Ringworm
  - FeLV
  - FIV
  - Inappropriate urination
  - Inappropriate defecation
  - Parvovirus (feline and canine)
  - GI parasites generally (i.e. coccidia, roundworms, hookworms etc)

**Please visit these websites:**

- Ontario Shelter Medicine Association (OSMA)
  - <https://www.ontariosheltermedicine.org/>
- Maddie's Fund
  - <https://www.maddiesfund.org/index.htm>
- ASPCA Spay and Neuter Alliance (formally Humane Alliance)
  - <https://www.aspc.org/humane-alliance>
- Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV)
  - <https://www.sheltervet.org/>
- University of Florida Shelter Medicine Online Courses
  - <https://onlinesheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/Kjashlfkjsha>

**Talent LMS THS online training needed prior to rotation:**

- WHIMIS
  - \* **this is the main course that MUST be completed prior to the rotation, the other courses would be more for interest**
- Risk injury prevention
- Rabies observation
- Hazard identification
- Infectious disease control

- Radiation

## **Tentative Student Scheduling:**

### **One day student placements:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Service</b>
7am-7:30am	Shelter tour
7:30-10:30am	Main clinic shelter surgery service
10:30am-2pm	Feline medicine service
2-3pm	Late lunch – please bring snacks for throughout the day prior to this
3-6pm	Intake service

### **Two day student placements:**

Day 1:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Service</b>
9am-9:30am	Shelter tour
9:30am-2pm	Feline or canine medicine service
2-3pm	Lunch
3-6pm	Intake service

Day 2:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Service</b>
7am-12pm	Main clinic surgery service
12-1pm	Lunch
1-4pm	Feline or canine medicine service (whichever wasn't done the day before)

### **One week student rotation:**

- Monday-Friday placement typically (exceptions could be made on a case by case basis)
- Shelter tour on the first day
- Two sets of rounds as detailed below (case-based and ASV Shelter Guidelines)
- One day of:
  - Intake service
  - Feline medicine service
  - Canine medicine service
  - Main clinic shelter surgery service
  - Spay and neuter clinic service

### **Two week student rotation:**

- Monday-Friday placement typically (exceptions could be made on a case by case basis)
- Shelter tour on the first day
- Rounds as scheduled below (case-based, ASV Shelter Guidelines and ASV Spay and Neuter Guidelines)
- Two days (ideally in a row) of:
  - Intake service
  - Feline medicine service
  - Canine medicine service

- One day of:
  - Main clinic shelter surgery service
  - Spay and neuter clinic service
  - +/- Public veterinary services appointments or surgery (when program is fully running)
  - Canine and feline training departments with certified trainers or Dr. Jacklyn Ellis
- Half day of:
  - Laboratory training with Laboratory and Pharmacy RVT Lauren McIntyre
  - Will be scheduled on either a Wednesday or Friday
- Approximately 1 hours of:
  - Presentation on “Adopters Welcome” by Greg Ratelle who is the Senior Manager, Client Care

**Intern schedule:**

Monday	Tuesday - Friday
9am: Shelter tour ~9:30 -2pm: Feline medicine 2-3pm: Lunch 3-6pm: Intake	3 days in MC surgery and 1 day in SNC surgery service. SNC day will be later in the week (Thurs or Fri ideally).

## **Rounds schedule and info:**

There will be ideally 2-3 sets of rounds as outlined below which will take place during the rotation week. The student will be advised ahead of the rotation as to the dates of the rounds which will vary depending on the student’s schedule. The rounds will typically be held with the veterinarian you are on service with that day. Time of rounds may vary based on the shelter schedule and service needs that day (i.e. in the morning, over lunch time, at the end of the day etc.). The length of the rounds will be ~30 - 60mins. The rounds will be an informal discussion that the student will lead (PowerPoint presentations not required!).

The type of rounds are outlined as below.

1. Case-based rounds:
  - The student will pick a specific shelter-focused case or topic that they have encountered or are interested in learning more about.
  - Examples could include: shelter flow, intake procedures and recommendations, outbreak management, hemoabdomen, ringworm, upper respiratory infection and canine infectious respiratory disease complex, FELV/FIV etc.
2. Association of Shelter Veterinarian (ASV) Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters:
  - The document can be found here: <https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf>
  - The student will read the introduction and one topic of their choice (i.e. Population Management, Medical Healthy and Physical Well-being, Euthanasia etc) from the document.

- The student will then relay the interesting and important info they learned from their sections.

For 2-week rotation students there will be an additional third set of rounds as below. For veterinary interns, whose focus of the rotation is more surgical in nature, there will be one set of rounds as below. This rounds topic will be scheduled in the same manner as the rounds details above.

3. Association of Shelter Veterinarian (ASV) Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs (for veterinary interns on rotation)
  - The document can be found here:  
<https://avmajournals.avma.org/doi/pdf/10.2460/javma.249.2.165Jshgfkas>
  - The student will read the document and will discuss ~10 interesting and/or important pieces of information that they learned.

### **Surgical information for student/interns on rotation:**

Some information and materials in this section were adapted with permission from RAVS

In order of priority, the goals of the THS surgical team(s) while there are student(s) on rotation are:

- provide safe and efficient surgeries for the animals in our care
- provide mentored surgical opportunities

We aim to reach these goals while still completing the assigned daily duties and tasks at the shelter.

Student surgical participation will be **determined by 4 factors:**

- 1) health and safety needs of the patient
- 2) the case load and tasks to be completed for that day
- 3) the surgical and teaching comfort level of the attending THS veterinarian
- 4) the student's learning goals and skill level

Ultimately the level of participation for each procedure is determined on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the attending THS veterinarian working with the student.

It is expected that students will dedicate sufficient time for reviewing relevant surgery information and practicing their surgery techniques and skills prior to the rotation.

Rough surgical time limit guidelines for each surgery ensure teaching does not supersede patient welfare. Surgical time limits are maximums, not goals. It is the responsibility of both the attending THS veterinarian and student to be mindful of the surgery timelines.

#### **Surgical Time Limits:**

- Canine Spay: 45 minutes or less
- Canine Neuter: 20 minutes or less
- Feline Spay: 30 minutes or less
- Feline Neuter: 10 minutes or less



- Pediatric surgeries in animals less than 6 months of age should be about half of the above times (thus student involvement maybe less in these cases)
- Other cases: as determined by the attending veterinarian

#### **Procedure limits:**

- In stable patients where time allows, students will be given 2 opportunities to perform procedures. For example, 2 attempts to place an IVC in the SAME LEG or 2 attempts to place an ET tube.
- If these attempts are unsuccessful, the RVT or DVM will take over

**Expedited Cases:** There will be cases considered non-teaching (no active student participation other than observation), either due to patient health status and/or due to caseload timing. A teaching case may be converted to a non-teaching case if patient status changes under anaesthesia or the patient's surgical status is requiring a lengthier surgical time due to intra-operative challenges or complications.

In order to meet our goals and timelines as indicated above the following steps should be taken by the student and the THS attending veterinarian in the morning of your scheduled surgery day:

- Discuss the student's previous placements, experience and comfort level
- Together estimate which of the colour coded levels the student would fall into (GREEN, BLUE or BLACK)
- Decide on 3-5 specific learning goals both for surgery and aesthetic for the day based on the case load, surgery schedule and the student's skills and experience
  - o Common surgical goal examples may include:
    - Using a spay hook to locate the uterus
    - Performing millers knot(s)
    - Improving incision placement
    - Placing a tattoo
    - Improving intradermal skin closure
  - o Below is a more extensive list of common surgical skills that could be potential goals
- Ahead of each surgical case, the student and the THS attending veterinarian should
  - o Discuss the case specific aesthetic protocol and considerations
  - o Discuss specific induction and recovery considerations
  - o Discuss possible complications and how one would address them
  - o The student should verbally walk through the entire surgery with the veterinarian
    - i.e. First I will make a skin incision in the middle third of the ventral abdomen between the pubis and umbilicus. Then I will bluntly dissect the SQ tissue to expose the linea. etc

#### **Active Observer (Level 1 - GREEN)**

- Feline Neuter: manipulate testicles into scrotum, apply tension on skin, incise scrotum over testicle, exteriorize testicle and spermatic cord and remove fascia, use blade to cut spermatic cord against clamp, (DVM performs ligation), tattoo
- Canine Neuter: manipulate testicle in pre-scrotal position, apply tension on skin, incise skin over testicle, exteriorize testicle and spermatic cord and remove fascia, place and remove clamps

from spermatic cord, use blade to cut spermatic cord against clamps, cut suture (DVM ligates/sutures), tattoo

- Feline or Canine Spay: skin incision, blunt and sharp dissection of subcutaneous tissue, identify linea alba, practice tenting up the linea (vet enters abdomen), palpate inside abdomen through incision, use spay hook on right side of patient to retrieve uterus, palpate suspensory ligament (vet stretches or breaks down), place and remove clamps, use blade to cut tissue against clamps, cut suture (DVM ligates/sutures), tattoo

#### **Assistant Surgeon (Level 2 - BLUE)**

- Blue Learning Goals = Green level skills PLUS:
- Feline Neuter: Perform figure 8 knot
- Canine Neuter: place 1 of 2 ligatures on spermatic cords, suture subcutaneous tissue & skin
- Feline Spay or Canine Spay: place 1 of 2 ligatures at each location, suture subcutaneous tissue & skin

#### **Mentored Surgeon (Level 3 - BLACK)**

- Black Learning Goals = Green and Blue level skills, PLUS:
- Start procedure at beginning & work for defined time
- Start procedure at halfway point & work for defined time
- Focus on challenging parts of procedure - Exteriorize testicle, entering/closing abdomen, suspensories, friable tissue handling
- Place both ligatures on neuters and spays
- Learn high volume techniques with a staff member or other experienced HQHV surgeon

Typically students can expect on a THS rotation placement to be scheduled for 1 surgery day in the main clinic of the shelter and 1 surgery day in the Public Veterinary Service (PVS) spay and neuter clinic (SNC). This is subject to change depending on the shelter scheduling and shelter needs.

#### **Main clinic shelter service:**

- range of 3-30 scheduled surgeries depending on the species and type of surgeries and surgeon on staff
- surgeries can include pediatric or adult spays and neuters, enucleations, cystotomies, amputations, FHO, dental surgeries, wound explores/repairs, pyometras etc
- completed on shelter animals

#### **PVS SNC clinic service:**

- there are three different clinics that run out of the SNC
  1. High quality high volume (HQHV) straight forward spays and neuters on healthy young cats or dogs under 7 years old
    - a. Typically 10-30 surgeries are scheduled for this clinic/day
  2. High quality low volume (HQLV) spays, neuters, hernia repairs, cryptorchid neuters on animals that could be older than 7 and/or under or overweight, typically surgeries that are declined from the HQHV clinic
    - a. Typically 3-10 surgeries are scheduled for this clinic/day
  3. Dental surgeries ranging from COHAT 1-5

- a. Typically 1-3 surgeries are scheduled for this clinic/day
- Trap neuter return (TNR) cat surgeries are also completed at the end of the day in one of the three clinics as needed
- surgeries are performed on public owned animals thus obtaining informed owner consent is critical
- on the consent forms that the owner's fill out in the morning of the surgery, there are checkboxes for the owner to initial
- one checkbox indicates that they consent to a student or intern completing or assisting in the surgery under supervision of a THS veterinarian
- this checkbox MUST be initialed for a student to participate with the surgery (other than observing)
- this responsibility to obtain informed consent maybe delegated to the student