Reaching UP
An AVMA-AVMF Community Service Program

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What Is Reaching UP?

- AVMA-AVMF program
  - Provides direct veterinary services for “Underserved Populations”

- Veterinary services provided
  - High Volume, High Quality (HVHQ) spay/neuter for control of dog/cat populations
  - Preventive medicine
    - Vaccination (rabies)
    - Parasite control
    - Treatment of minor injuries/conditions
  - Euthanasia
Rosebud Indian Reservation

- South Dakota, USA
- Sioux, a Lakota people
Clinic operation
Program Support and Roles

- AVMA
  - 84,500 veterinarian members
  - 149 staff
  - Program management; medical and surgical expertise, legal assistance

- AVMF
  - AVMA’s charitable arm
  - Financial support ~$100,000 annually

- Reservation - Indian Health Services
  - Access and on-site facilities
  - Volunteers
  - Communication with residents

Dr. Sheilah Robertson
“Outside the Box” Program for AVMA

- Organization focused on policy, education and support of the veterinary profession
- Reaching UP is a direct delivery, “boots-on-the-, veterinary service program
- Decision to develop based on:
  - Need
  - Opportunity for tangible societal contribution
  - Interest in strategic approaches to improving animal and human health—One Health
About Rosebud—The Need

- ~2,000 sq mi (~5,000 km²), 21,000 people
- One of most economically depressed areas in United States
- Elected government
  - Executive Officers and Tribal Council
  - 20 communities
- No full-time veterinary service providers
- Limited animal control function
# About Rosebud—The Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal issues</th>
<th>Human issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Owned, community and stray/feral dogs and cats, overpopulation</td>
<td>• Dog bite injuries</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Starvation, cannibalism</td>
<td>• Rabies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Preventable disease</td>
<td>• Parasites</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Injury</td>
<td>• Emotional impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Predation</td>
<td>• Round-ups, shooting of stray animals</td>
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Search for Solutions

- Joint effort between tribal health office and Spay Oklahoma
- 2002 - tribal resolution
- 2003 - Inaugural Pet Care Celebration
  - First high-volume spay/neuter clinic - 649 animals
  - Educational component
  - Strong community support; 71 local volunteers
- 2004—Second four-day clinic provides 459 surgeries
Search for Solutions

- 2005—More extensive assessment of animal issues
  - 3 strategically timed clinics
    - Prevent spring litters, terminate pregnancies, pre-winter
  - Transportation from outlying communities
  - Relinquishment option
    - Rehoming, euthanasia
Evidence of Success

- 2003-2010
  - ~6,000 companion animal sterilizations
  - >1,500 dogs and cats moved to off-reservation facilities or euthanized
- 50% reduction in dog bite injuries treated at Indian Health Service hospital
- 75% reduction in animal cruelty complaints
Evidence of Success

- Improved animal care
  - 2006—owners of sterilized animals return to clinics for preventive care and treatment
- Fewer dog packs adjacent to schools on the reservation
  - Reduction in numbers
  - Feeding of discarded cafeteria food curtailed after education about risks
- 20-25% increase in dog food sales reported by grocery retailers
But...Challenges Remained

- Financial—Consistent source of support needed
- Operational
  - Identification and availability of specially trained surgeons and technicians (HVHQ spay/neuter techniques)
  - Need for improved facilities and equipment
  - Standard operating procedures for quality assurance
  - Updated animal handling and anesthetic/analgesic protocols
The Transition to AVMA-AVMF

- **Mid-2010**—AVMA approached to assist
  - Provide operational infrastructure
  - Consistent financial support
  - Expand to remainder of Rosebud and, potentially, neighboring reservations

- **2010-2011**—Multiple models explored
  - AVMA Executive Board approval
  - AVMF support obtained
The Transition to AVMA-AVMF

- 2011—AVMA provides services under auspices of Spay Oklahoma/SpayFirst! with AVMF support, begins infrastructure development

- Late 2012—Formal letter of invitation (agreement) from Tribal Council to the AVMA
Reaching UP: Staffing

- Management team
  - Program manager
  - Onsite coordinator/tribal liaison

- Clinic staff
  - Veterinarians, technicians
  - Volunteers, including jail trustees
  - Contracts for clinic staff to ensure clear expectations
Reaching UP: Infrastructure

- Operations
  - Date selection
  - Standard operating procedures
  - Post-clinic reporting
- Local facilities
  - Animals - Patient access, animal holding, medical/surgical, patient release
  - Personnel housing and meals
- Local collaboration and buy-in
  - State veterinarian’s office, State VMA,
  - Veterinary Medical Board, local practitioners
Reaching UP: Infrastructure

- Medical protocols
  - Animal care
    - Handling, who/how, anesthesia/analgesia, preventive medicine
  - Controlled substance management
  - Referrals for continuing care
  - Rehoming, euthanasia
  - Personnel safety
    - Vaccination, injury prevention, insurance
Recent Accomplishments

- Repurposing and transfer of equipment from other AVMA and AVMF programs
- Protocols for animal handling, anesthesia/analgesia, and surgery.
- Mobile clinic
- Fundraising
- “Oath in Action” volunteer-based awareness and complementary service events
…and Opportunities

- Collaborative research
  - Epidemiologic studies of community impacts (e.g., bite injuries)
- Nonsurgical sterilization techniques
  - Immunocontraceptives
  - Chemical sterilants (intratesticular injections)
...and Opportunities

- Positive impacts of preventive medicine on animal and human health and welfare
- Education
  - Veterinary students—One Health in action
  - Community—Health and life skill education
- Eventual self-sufficiency = Demand for services sufficient to support on-site veterinary facility (win-win-win)
Questions