



Dr Aleisha Swartz

Outreach Veterinarian
University of Wisconsin Shelter Medicine Program

Dr. Aleisha Swartz graduated from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine in 2002. While in small animal private practice, she worked extensively with several rescue groups in the Atlanta area. In 2010 she decided to follow her passion into shelter medicine working at Fulton County Animal Services, a shelter serving the inner city of Atlanta. Since that time, she has worked with nonprofit and municipal shelters, cat rescues, sanctuaries and spay-neuter programs.

As Chief Veterinarian at the Hawaiian Humane Society, Dr. Swartz was part of a team that supervised over 50 employees and the 24-hour shelter operations. During her tenure, adoptions increased to an all-time high, euthanasia decreased to the lowest levels in the organization's history, and the quality of care for the animals improved. Her expertise was essential in the design and construction of the recently opened state-of-the-art admissions, veterinary and adoptions facility. She played a pivotal role in advocating for, and gaining approval for the construction and operation of a high quality, high volume, low fee spay and neuter clinic for owned pets and free roaming cats.

Dr. Swartz is currently the Outreach Veterinarian with the University of Wisconsin Shelter Medicine Program. As part of the UWSMP team she works with shelters across the US (and beyond) to increase their lifesaving capacity by assisting to implement best practices, managing outbreaks of infectious disease in addition to maintaining an online resource library for shelter professionals and the public.

Dr. Swartz serves as the President-Elect of the Hawaii Veterinary Medical association and a member of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians as well as the American Veterinary Medical Association. In 2014, the University of Georgia recognized her as one of the Top 40 Under 40 graduates.

Dr. Swartz seeks to improve the level of care for animals in shelters as well as that for animals living in the community, and has a special interest in encouraging shelter staff to become effective and engaging leaders who make a positive impact.

Abstract

Feline Influenza in New York City

When Avian Influenza H7N2 infected cats in a New York City animal shelter last year, it was the first outbreak of its kind, and the first documented case of cat-to-cat transmission. Thanks to an historic collaborative outbreak response by organizations and agencies many cats' lives were saved. The outbreak also taught health professionals and researchers more about the virus.

This session will describe the New York outbreak and how shelter medicine allowed it to be contained while saving nearly all the infected cats. The focus will be on how this response allowed the shelter to re-strategize and optimize its abilities for prevention and lifesaving, as well as the diagnostics and preventive practices that animal shelters need to understand to prevent loss of life in future outbreaks.