



Veterinary Care and End of Life Care For Companion Animals

Position:

Calgary Humane Society believes it is the responsibility of all owners of companion animals to provide them with regular and lifetime veterinary care, including end-of-life care. Further, failure to provide such care is a violation of Alberta's Animal Protection Act.

The CHS believes all owners should have a plan to provide such care prior to acquiring a pet. If an owner does not have the financial resources to provide needed veterinary care, including regular check-ups, vaccines and dental care, they should surrender the animal to an organization such as CHS that can provide this care for the animal.

The Calgary Humane Society believes that owners whose companion animals suffer from incurable illnesses are responsible for providing either palliative care (i.e., comfort measures, including medication to manage pain), or should palliative care not be an option, humane euthanasia if the animal's suffering cannot otherwise be alleviated.

Neglecting to provide or failing to provide suitable care for an animal regardless of the animal's life stage or prognosis constitutes an offense under both Alberta's Animal Protection Act and Canada's Criminal Code.

Failure to provide an animal with required veterinary care, including needed dental care and grooming, may result in charges being laid.

Because many animals do not exhibit pain overtly, it is the responsibility of the owner to consult with a veterinarian about the decisions around palliative care or euthanasia.

Palliative care remains a viable option only so long as the animal's pain can be managed as determined by a veterinarian and only so long as the owner remains able to meet the animal's developing care needs; thereafter, the only humane option is euthanasia.

While losing a loved pet is a painful experience, Calgary Humane Society believes that the animal's needs and welfare take priority over the owner's feelings.