

**RESOLUTION #3—2024  
Regular Winter Session**

Submitted by  
Board of Directors

**REVISED POLICY ON DOG AND CAT POPULATION MANAGEMENT**

**RESOLVED** that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) House of Delegates adopt the revised policy on Dog and Cat Population Management as noted in the [attachment](#) (additions are underlined; deletions are ~~struck through~~).

**Statement about the Resolution**

The policy on [Dog and Cat Population Management](#) was considered by the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) at their September in-person meeting. The AWC believes this policy continues to be valuable for those working in animal services and shelter medicine. AVMA staff also routinely references this policy in response to inquiries related to mandatory spay/neuter policies, regulation and statute.

The proposed revisions improve the policy by highlighting that dog and cat population management is an ongoing process that includes interventions for owned pets, which contribute to the free-roaming and stray populations. This holistic approach is aligned with the most recent revision of the [World Organization for Animal Health \(WOAH\) Terrestrial Code Chapter 7.7 on Dog Population Management](#). Other suggested revisions recognize that pet overpopulation is currently a regional issue in the United States, which has resulted in varied priorities for animal service agencies and shelters throughout the country. For example, in areas where the number and type of dogs and cats available to adopt do not meet the demand of the community, resources for programs aimed at reducing relinquishment through animal behavior support may be prioritized over spay/neuter efforts. Also, focus was brought to the culture change in animal services from punitive enforcement of related laws to serving as a community resource that cares for pets and their owners. This does not negate the importance of animal protection and public health laws, such as licensing and rabies vaccination, but prioritizes keeping pets and their owners together when appropriate. Lastly, additional content was added related to effective dog and cat population management interventions, including connecting owners to resources within their communities and encouraging new owners in establishing a veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR) for their new pet.

**Financial Impact: None**

	<b>Board of Directors</b>	<b>House Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Reference Committee #</b>	<b>House of Delegates</b>
<b>Recommend Approval</b>	X	X (as amended)	X (amended as noted below*)	X (amended as noted below*)
<b>Recommend Disapproval</b>				
<b>Recommend Referral to...</b>				
<b>No Recommendation</b>				
<b>Recommend Postpone Indefinitely</b>				

(use this space for additional narrative, if needed)

**\*Revised Policy on Dog and Cat Population Management**

1 – Amendment #1 (also recommended by HAC)

- Strike “surgical or nonsurgical” in section A-4.
- Insert the word “and” after “behavioral interventions” in section A-5.
- Strike “and non-surgical methods of sterilization” in section A-5.
- Strike “surgical and non-surgical” in section C-3.

2 – Amendment #2

- Replace “bill” with “services” in section A-3.
- Replace “control” with “services” in section C-1.
- Insert “and adherence to local legal requirements.” to the end of section C-1a.

3 – Amendment #3

- Insert a new bullet point as section A-6, that will read “The AVMA supports awareness campaigns that provide education on how free-roaming dog and cat populations adversely affect wildlife, ecosystems, and public health.”

4 – Amendment #4

- Insert “evidence-based medicine to form” after the word “use” in the last sentence in section C-3.