



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Two Confirmed Cases of Canine Distemper Discovered at Acadiana Animal Aid**

*Lafayette, LA, December 15, 2019* — Acadiana Animal Aid, a local no-kill animal shelter and nonprofit organization, discovered late Friday two confirmed cases of canine distemper at the shelter. Both dogs were adults. Canine distemper is a contagious and serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems of puppies and dogs. Puppies younger than four months old and dogs that have not been vaccinated against canine distemper are at increased risk of acquiring the disease.<sup>1</sup>

“As a result of two dogs testing positive, our Medical Director, Dr. Katie Crabbe, performed a risk assessment for all dogs on site, in foster, and adopted. She also ran tests on a number of dogs to determine if they are infected with the virus. We expect the test results by Wednesday,” said Jeanine Foucher, Executive Director of Acadiana Animal Aid. “We are communicating with our fosters and adopters as well as volunteers and staff and will keep everyone updated once we receive the test results.”

Acadiana Animal Aid remains on a dog intake hold – meaning no dogs may enter the shelter. This includes transfers, owners surrenders, or strays. Acadiana Animal Aid has been on an intake hold for the last few weeks, so the number of dogs entering the shelter and exposed to the virus has been drastically minimized.

Distemper outbreaks happen in shelters because many dogs who enter do not have protective immunity to the virus, particularly dogs younger than one year. Every animal entering Acadiana Animal Aid is vaccinated upon intake, however the vaccine takes three weeks to become fully effective. If dogs are exposed during this time (especially puppies and stray adults with no known vaccine history) they may still develop distemper.

The canine distemper vaccine is highly effective in adult dogs, and the risk is low if an animal has been adequately vaccinated. The virus does not affect cats. Acadiana Animal Aid stressed the importance of keeping pets up to date on their vaccines.

“We are taking precautionary and proactive steps to ensure the health of all of the dogs in our care. Our Medical Director will be testing all potentially exposed dogs and we will be keeping the public up to date as new information becomes available. Testing and supportive care for dogs with canine distemper is extremely expensive. If you’ve ever thought about supporting Acadiana Animal Aid, now is the time,” said Foucher.

For more information about Acadiana Animal Aid or to make a donation to the organization, visit <https://acadianaanimalaid.org/give/>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.avma.org/>