

ISVMA Response to Chicago PAWS Propaganda Packets

Mandatory Spay/Neuter (AKA the "Pet Overpopulation & Safety Ordinance")

Dec. 4, 2008. Veterinarians in the Chicago area have reported receiving a packet of information on the proposed Mandatory Spay/Neuter ordinance under consideration in the City of Chicago. The ordinance is referred to by its supporters as the "Pet Overpopulation & Safety Ordinance." The propaganda packet includes a letter asking veterinarians to sign a letter in support of the ordinance. The supporters write that, "Our intent is to post the names of all of the veterinarians who support this bill on our website and encourage all of our supporters to utilize the services of these animal welfare friendly veterinarians." This statement might be construed as an effort to intimidate veterinarians into signing the letter of support or risk being exposed as not "welfare friendly".

The proponents of this ordinance have drawn a line in the sand without sharing all of the relevant information. ISVMA and its member veterinarians support and recommend spay and neuter surgery as part of responsible pet ownership. However, state law is very clear that veterinary medicine can only be practiced when, "...the veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of an animal and the need for medical treatment **AND THE CLIENT**, owner or other caretaker **HAS AGREED** to follow the instructions of the veterinarian." (225 ILCS 115/3)

The ordinance you have been asked to support violates the requirements of the Illinois Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act of 2004 (225 ILCS 115) by placing the determination of medical need in the hands of the City of Chicago and not the client in consultation with a medical professional.

There are many organizations that have joined ISVMA in opposition to mandatory spay/neuter. The position statements of just a few of these organizations are hyperlinked below:

[Anti-Cruelty Society](#)

[American College of Theriogenologists](#)

[Chicago Veterinary Medical Association](#)

[Alley Cat Allies](#)

The ISVMA has previously issued a [press release](#) in opposition to the ordinance and [written a letter](#) to the members of the Chicago City Council to explain our opposition.

Please consider the information included in the attached materials and, if you live or practice in the City of Chicago, contact your council member(s) to explain your position on this well-intended but flawed proposal. You can find your alderman's contact information at <http://www.chicityclerk.com/citycouncil/alderman/find.html>.

Irrespective of the implications contained in the letter you received from the proponents, you can be "animal welfare friendly" and still oppose this proposed ordinance.