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CONTROL ORDER RESTRICTING MOVEMENT OF SHELTER AND RESCUE DOGS DUE TO CANINE RESPIRATORY DISEASE OUTBREAK

In late June 2024, a disease affecting shelter and rescue dogs causing upper and lower respiratory signs and death, was identified in Delaware. Clinical signs include lethargy, inappetence, fever, clear or mucopurulent (green) nasal and/or ocular discharge, cough, vomiting, and difficulty breathing. *Mycoplasma cynos* was isolated from ill dogs at one rescue. The outbreak is suspected to be multifactorial, involving multiple pathogens that comprise the Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRDC). As of July 11, 2024, three Delaware animal shelters and one private rescue have confirmed respiratory outbreaks in dogs, and another shelter has treated affected dogs as veterinary outpatients.

Under the authority granted in 3 Del. C. § 7101, the Delaware Department of Agriculture has issued this control order restricting the movement of dogs into and out of Delaware shelters and rescues. More specifically:

- ***No Delaware shelters or rescues shall accept out-of-state intakes of dogs.***
- ***Dogs moving out of shelters and dog rescues shall remain within the state of Delaware. The Office of the State Veterinarian must pre-approve the movement of clinically-affected animals.***
- ***Any shelter or dog rescue that has a confirmed case of CIRDC must report the number of dogs in isolation for respiratory signs to the Office of the State Veterinarian every other day, beginning with the issuance of this control order and/or the first day a dog within the facility exhibits signs of respiratory illness. In addition, shelters and rescues must submit a weekly report every Friday of non-clinical adoption placements, including the dog's date of initial intake, number of days in the shelter, and adoption date, origin, destination, breed, age, and sex.***

This order will be in effect for 30 days. At the discretion of the State Veterinarian, this control order can be extended beyond 30 days.

Contagious respiratory infections are the most common cause of illness in dogs in shelters and are highly contagious. Puppies and older adult dogs are at greatest risk of severe infections. The viruses and bacteria that make up the Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex can be shed by infected dogs before they show clinical signs of illness. Therefore, the movement of an apparently healthy dog may still pose a risk to the shelter population or other dogs in the foster or permanent home.

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