

Animal Allies, a spay/neuter clinic in Spartanburg SC, has facilitated more than 70,000 surgeries since 1998. Beginning in 1998, that first year we facilitated 144 surgeries. Animal Allies volunteers took on the responsibility to educate our community about the health advantages to their pet of being spayed and neutered.

- We did a bi-weekly spot on local talk radio.
- We participated as partners with organizations such as Mobile Meals, United Way, Safe Home Rape Crisis, Soup Kitchens, United Ministries, Christmas in Action to offer their clients our services.
- We set up booths at community events, health fairs, expos, spring fling, in front of grocery stores.
- We participated in forums at SCETV, League of Women Voters, Animal Control. We were part of community tasks forces in neighborhoods like Una. We met with local govt officials, business people, educators, media.
- We called "Free to good homes" ads every Sunday and offered a free spay for the mama dog.
- We put a volunteer in the receiving office of SHS for 1 month who asked every person arriving to relinquish a pet why they were turning the pet in. We would explain how altering their pet may solve the problem, then ask "If I could provide surgery that you could afford ... today ... would you keep your pet?" Many took us up on that offer that month, and it set a new practice for SHS.

Grant monies did not pay for the thousands of hours of outreach to the community and educating we've done since 1998. The veterinary community does not do this targeted marketing/education necessary to produce the number of surgeries needed to reduce intake/euthanasia. 70,000 surgeries were accomplished because our mission was to spay/neuter enough cats and dogs to reduce the intake at our local shelter and decrease the euthanasia numbers. And it worked.

In those early years as Animal Allies grew, we tracked the numbers. One year, intake in Spartanburg County decreased by 6% and euthanasia was decreased by 7 %. That was unheard of in a shelter in our state. If legislation is passed that interferes with the business model of a s/n clinic like Animal Allies, which includes all the educating, outreach, awareness and persistence we employed to get to 70,000 I have to ask this question:

WHO WILL THEN DO THESE SURGERIES?

It's obviously from the 70,000 number that the need is there in our community. It's a service pet owners want, that they use, that they CHOOSE< that improves quality of life and alleviates pet overpopulation and the tax burden that results from an Animal Control always playing catch up, reactive, not able to be proactive just by the sheer volume of strays and owner turn ins they must handle.

With (currently) 31 vet practices in Spartanburg, each vet would have had to do 2258 additional surgeries to accomplish those 70,000 surgeries.

(However... when Animal Allies began providing services in 1998 there were less than 20 vet practices in the county.)

Based on the 31 vet practices number (which we know is inaccurate for all the years since 1998):

Working a 5 day week, 260 work days a year, that is an additional 11+ surgeries a day each vet practice would have to perform since 1998. You ask around. There is no private vet practice that can schedule in an additional 11 surgeries in order to accomplish in our community what a s/n clinic can.

So if s/n clinics are crippled, force to reduce functions, financially unable to run at their optimum capacity by overregulation and unwise legislation the question remains...

WHO WILL DO THE NEXT 70,000 SURGERIES?

Because the private vets, who are lobbying for this legislation, cannot physically accommodate those life saving surgeries.