



The Dumb Friends League Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur Impact Report: Opening & Initial Months of Operation

April 2022

The Dumb Friends League Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur

Since our founding in 1910, the Dumb Friends League has proudly served as a trusted resource in Denver and throughout the state of Colorado—rescuing, sheltering and adopting thousands of animals each year in pursuit of our mission to end pet homelessness and animal suffering. We are proud to serve as the most comprehensive provider of direct-to-animal welfare services in Colorado. We also recognize that we are part of a large, diverse community, and our impact on the future of animal welfare can be amplified by supporting the people living and working in it.

The nonprofit Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur is the League’s second donor-subsidized community veterinary hospital designed for pets whose owners have nowhere else to turn when they need urgent care. The hospital furthers our mission to end pet homelessness and animal suffering by ensuring that pets in our community are able to stay in loving homes, rather than being relinquished or left to suffer unnecessarily, when their owners are facing financial hardships.

Opened in January 2022, this hospital is located on Colorado State University’s new “Spur” campus in Denver, situated amidst two especially high-need Denver neighborhoods—Globeville and Elyria-Swansea. These communities are among the city’s oldest, and their residents have faced countless economic, structural and environmental challenges over the years. This strategic location is designed to help the League reach more underserved pet owners in close proximity to their own neighborhoods.

At the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur, patrons pay their discounted bills in small installments—often just \$25 or less each month. If a pet owner cannot afford to pay for care, they are never turned away or penalized. To fulfill our commitment to pets in need, regardless of their owners’ ability to pay, the hospital is projected to operate with an annual deficit of more than \$1 million, including a significant amount of debt forgiveness for patrons who are not able to pay for care.

A Unique Learning Experience

The Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur is unique, as the building in which the hospital is located is open to the public and designed to let visitors observe our veterinary team at work. The public-facing side of the hospital features large observation windows, microphones on veterinary staff, video projections, and a docent positioned outside the windows to engage with visitors and explain the medical procedures taking place.

The Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur is also a teaching hospital. Pairs of veterinary student externs from Colorado State University take part in two-week rotations to gain first-hand experience with community veterinary medicine. In addition, a group of four graduated veterinary interns who are interested in gaining an additional year of hands-on experience split their internship time between the League’s animal shelters and the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur.

Along with reaching both public visitors and veterinary students, the League expects to begin offering our free, curriculum-based Humane Education lessons for students in grades K-12 at the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur in the spring of 2022. The lessons planned for this new space include *Staying Safe Around Dogs or Cats*, *Bully Prevention*, *Caring for Pets*, and *Careers in Animal Welfare*.

A bilingual (Spanish/English) educator has also been hired to join our Humane Education team this spring, expanding our reach to serve the Spanish-speaking communities in and around the hospital, and throughout the Denver metropolitan area.



A docent explaining a procedure to public visitors.

Opening & Initial Months of Operation

After many months of preparation and planning, the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur officially opened its doors on January 8, 2022. Between January 8 – 23, the hospital team cared exclusively for shelter animals while they fine-tuned systems in the new space and acclimated to the on-view nature of this work. They performed surgery on 121 shelter animals.

On February 1, the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur began providing care exclusively for owned pets in need, operating on an appointment and referral basis. This facility complements and supports the League's Veterinary Hospital at Yuma, which provides urgent veterinary care for owned pets on a walk-in basis.

In February, the hospital's first full month of operation serving owned pets, the veterinary team saw 282 pets in need; performed 123 simple exams; performed 138 exams with diagnostics; and performed 29 surgeries.

In the month of March, activity at the hospital continued to grow, and the hospital team held 566 pet visits; performed 356 exams; and performed 107 surgeries.



The hospital is currently operating with a team of 18 dedicated staff, not including veterinary student interns and externs. We are working to grow this team by approximately five more staff in the coming months, to support the growing demand for the hospital's services.

As the hospital team reaches full capacity in the coming months, we anticipate caring for more than 5,000 pets and families in need during the hospital's first full year of operation.

Budget & Expenses

Our current program expense budget for the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur is \$2,644,636. This budget encompasses the period of time from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, including six months of set-up and planning, with \$550,000 of one-time capital expense budgeted for equipment, and six months of operating costs.

In our next fiscal year, which begins on July 1, 2022, the annual expense budget is expected to reach \$3,000,000, with an anticipated deficit after fees for services of \$1,000,000. This anticipated annual expense deficit includes debt forgiveness for patrons who cannot afford to pay for care.

Since the hospital opened its doors in January 2022, the most significant expenses have been staffing costs. Salaries and wages for the hospital team in January and February totaled \$97,696.93. Costs for animal care supplies, vaccines, and animal transportation for patrons without access to their own vehicles totaled \$790.27 in January; while these numbers have not been closed out for February yet, it is anticipated that they will grow considerably in February and the months to come.

Thank You

With support from our compassionate community, more than 400 pets have received life-saving care at the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur since it opened its doors in January 2022.

SOUND Technology's generous support with the donation of a TruDR cSeries x-ray machine and a discounted Summit HF4 4-way float table has allowed the League to open the hospital and begin serving pets in need, and the people who love them, with lifesaving urgent care. In addition, this support has helped make it possible for public visitors and veterinary student externs and interns to gain exposure and new insights into the worlds of veterinary medicine and animal welfare.

We are deeply grateful for your support of the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur.

Thank you for playing a role in this important work!

Additional Resources

Learn more about the Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur:

- [Dumb Friends League Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur – Website](#)
- [The Dumb Friends League Veterinary Hospital at CSU Spur](#) – Article from the Dumb Friends League Website (February 3, 2022)
- [A new Dumb Friends League hospital seeks to lessen the costly burden of veterinary care](#) – Rocky Mountain PBS (February 14, 2022)