Dear D90 volunteers and fosters,

First, we want to say how grateful we are to all of you for helping us take on the challenge of eradicating disease from our shelter. Your efforts and your patience throughout this process have not gone unnoticed – we know how hard all of you are working to help our animals.

This message is to recap our efforts to eradicate CIRD-C from our shelter and to provide an update on where we currently stand.

In November, we began to see an increase in Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRD-C) illnesses, which are a group of upper respiratory illnesses that spread easily in shelter populations.  At the end of November 2022, we saw our first cases of canine influenza (CIV), one of the CIRD-C illnesses. This highly contagious yet treatable illness is particularly challenging in a shelter environment as it has been rare in the area, meaning there is a low level of immunity in the population, and it can circulate repeatedly. After consulting with veterinary infectious disease experts at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, we developed a plan to eradicate CIV that required us to create a “clean break” between our existing population and incoming population. Given that we receive 40 – 60 dogs every single day, this meant clearing out 2 – 3 rooms to give us a few days' grace period before we filled right back up again. After a push in the local news and social media, we managed to find placement for 160 dogs in three days by offering a $150 incentive to those who could foster a large dog for 2 weeks or more. This allowed us to start our clean break and stop the spread of disease to our incoming animals.  Many of you assisted in that amazing effort, and we are deeply grateful for your help!

Unfortunately, we have discovered infections of CIV on the unexposed side of our building, meaning that our clean break has been compromised. We are continuing to work with the University of Wisconsin experts to fight this outbreak and adjusting our strategies accordingly. The leader of this program, Dr. Sandra Newbury, is working to schedule an onsite visit with our team next week, and we are currently planning for the start of a new clean break. As soon as we have details and timelines to share, we will update all of you on what comes next. In the meantime, we will maintain our split operation. Returning to normal operations only to return to the split operation in a few days would create unnecessary strain on staff and volunteers, but we want to be clear that we do consider the dogs in our clean break area exposed at this time.

We know this is disappointing news for everyone, but rest assured, our team continues to work daily to identify outside-the-box strategies and pull every resource at our disposal to overcome this hurdle and save more lives. Dr. Newbury warned us from the beginning that setbacks would be very likely due to the size of our building and population, but she remains confident that we can succeed in eradicating CIV and become the largest single building shelter in the country to accomplish this action. We remain committed to our overall mission to #BeDallas90 and achieving, sustaining, and surpassing a 90% live release rate.  We need the community’s support now more than ever to help network animals for adoption, secure foster homes, and volunteer at our shelter to help us increase our outcomes as we continue through this process. Together, we can eradicate this illness and get back to Dallas90.

Thank you,

D90 Team