

Pet Preparedness Micro Chipping Project Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps

October 27, 2010



AFTER ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN

October 18-19, 2010



Figure1: MRC Pet Preparedness Coordinator Trish Chaffins, RN interacting with a micro-chip implant recipient

ADMINISTRATIVE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

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Fig. 2: Ron Enders, Mark Ratliff, and MRC Volunteer Tanya Horn discuss last minute logistics

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Figure 3: MRC Pet Preparedness Coordinator Trish Chaffins, RN

Executive Summary

The Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corp conducted a Micro Chip Pet Project on Monday and Tuesday October 18 and 19, 2010 from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM at the Tri-State Animal Clinic in Louisa, KY. This project was designed to increase the likelihood that special needs residents of Lawrence County would feel more comfortable about a temporary separation from their pet if conditions warranted that they had to take up short term lodging at one of our emergency shelters. During the ice storm of 2009 many persons, primarily elderly people living alone with a life companion pet, refused to move to a shelter because they were anxious about being separated from their pet. For over a week some of them endured freezing temperatures, lack of warm food or proper sanitary conditions because there was no prevision in the county for emergency sheltering of pets, or no family members were available to help out. These were the people whom we targeted for the free micro chipping to make sure that this scenario would never have to be repeated.

Micro chipping pets allows all humane societies and veterinarians to scan each animal that enters their facility. Owners are then notified via a national data bank where their animal can be located. This gives peace of mind to pet owners who may have to trust their pets in the hands of strangers, or if natural disasters led to their unwilling separation. Working with the local veterinarian clinic in Louisa, chips were purchased at cost and distributed free of charge to the selected recipients.

The three veterinarians who participated in the project, Dr. Mark Ratliff, Dr. Tim and Dr Julie miller, devoted their time and facility for the project. Medical reserve Corps volunteers assisted in notifying the public, and interacting with recipients while they waited to have the chip administered. It was a wonderful opportunity to share resources, develop lasted community partnerships and promote the medical Reserve Corps as an active agent in meeting the needs of our special needs population. 70 micro chips were administered in just two days and the appreciation of the clientele was outspoken and in some cases emotionally moving.



Figure 4: Julie Miller, DMV

On October 18 and 19, 2010, The Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps, conducted a MRC Pet Preparedness Micro-Chip project. Based upon the Incident Action Plans, the following objectives were developed for this Project

- Objective 1: develop a pro-active response to pet preparedness planning.
- Objective 2: cement a working relationship with the local veterinarians.

- Objective 3: Help to alleviate a major problem regarding special needs populations, their pets, and emergency shelters.

The purpose of this report is to analyze those response results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions for the Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps

Major Strengths

The major strengths identified by The Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps Pet Preparedness Micro-Chip Project are as follows:

- 100% effective team work between our MRC unit and the local Veterinarians. The chipping process was achieved in less than two days without incident. Our ability to work together has established a strong partnership that will continue to benefit ourselves and the pet owners in Lawrence County
- It provided an excellent opportunity to educate members of the public concerning pet preparedness even if they were not among the 70 selected to receive a micro chip. It is hoped that the event will increase the participation in micro chipping among residents who have the means to afford it.
- Finding new workable solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems. With pets not permitted in Lawrence County Emergency Shelters, the anxiety over being separated from one's pet during an emergency was a real problem. This project ensures that at least 70 such people will be more likely to take steps to preserve their health and perhaps even their lives during the next natural or manmade disaster that strikes the county. Successful solutions sometimes rely on our thinking outside the box.

Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the MRC Pet Preparedness Micro-Chip Project, several opportunities for improvement in the Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps' ability to respond to the project were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- Our MRC Unit would have preferred media coverage of the event to make the project more visible. The veterinarians requested that the media be kept out of the event to prevent their being swamped in the days to come with calls asking for free micro chips. The logic here is that the public would misunderstand the nature of the event. This unfortunately cost the MRC some much needed visibility for recruitment.
- Having a more complete list of would be recipients would have been helpful. Detailed statistics about special needs population in rural areas like Lawrence

County are incomplete. We are sure that some needy people simply fell through the cracks. A community wide assessment program should be part of the agendas for all community based agencies in Lawrence County.



Figure 5: "Winne" MRC UNIT 960 Pet Preparedness Mascot

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

Event Details

Event Name

Medical Reserve Corps Pet Preparedness Micro-Chip Project

Start Date

9:00 AM October 18, 2010

End Date

6:00 PM October 19, 2010

Duration

2 days

Location

Tri-State Animal Clinic, 11 Rhubens Br, Louisa, KY 41230

Mission

- Critical infrastructure Protection
- Planning
- Community Preparedness and Participation

Capabilities

- Community Preparedness and Participation
- Responder Safety and Health
- Emergency Public Safety and Security Response

Scenario

Actual Event – Pet Preparedness/Special Needs Population

Participating Organizations

- Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps
- Tri-State Animal Clinic

SECTION 2: RESPONSE SUMMARY

Summary of Events

PRELUDE:

THE WEEKS FOLLOWING THE EVENT INVOLVED CONTACTING PERSONS WHO WOULD BE CANDIDATES FOR THE MICRO CHIP. THESE PEOPLE WERE DRAWN FROM LISTS COMPILED BY TRI-STATE ANIMAL CLINIC AND THE DATA RECORDS OF THE LAWRENCE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT. THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS COMPOSED TO BE READ TO CANDIDATES FOR THE MICRO CHIP

Pet Microchip Offer Phone Message

Hello _____ (name of person you are calling) My name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of the Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps. The Medical reserve Corps unit, working with your Veterinarians at the Tri-State Animal Clinic in Louisa are offering free micro chip identification implants to qualifying Lawrence County residents. This is the best way to make sure that you and your pet can be reunited if separated during the course of a disaster. We understand that you have a pet named _____. Is that correct? Great! Because you meet the qualifications you can have (animals name) given a micro chip implant at the Tri-State Animal Clinic during regular business hours Monday-Tuesday October 18-19. No appointment is required. You will need to bring your pet and a means of identification to prove that you are the pet's owner. In light of the cost of having this done on your own, this is a great opportunity to have the peace of mind that the microchip brings at absolutely no cost to yourself. The implant is about the size of a grain of rice and is placed just under your pet's skin. The entire procedure is completed in just a few minutes. Is this something you are interested in? That's wonderful! Do you have any other questions? If you do, please feel free to contact us at 606-638-4389 (leave your name with them as a contact person).
Have a great day. Goodbye.

The Event:

Rotational shifts were pre determined for the MRC volunteers who would be present at the clinic during the event to answer questions about the process, pet preparedness and our Medical Reserve Corps organization. A pet preparedness brochure was available which highlighted the pets owned by MRC members to demonstrate that caring for pets was not just another assignment, but a real concern for the participating MRC members. While this took place in the waiting room, the three veterinarians would maintain a floating schedule to complete the implant procedure without having the recipient wait. Because of the dedication of the veterinarians and their staff there was never a waiting period for anyone during the entire two day event. The event covered two full days from 9:00AM until closing at 6:00 PM. 2 chips were given out on Monday and the remainder on Tuesday. Two chips were

held in reserve for recipients who could not make it into the clinic on either of those two days.

SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the Target Capabilities that were tested in The Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps Pet Preparedness Micro-Chip Project 2010. The observations included in this section are obtained from Actual Events and from feedback obtained in After Action Conferences.

Capability 1: Community Preparedness and Participation

Capability Summary:

- The Community Preparedness and Participation capability provides that everyone in America is fully aware, trained, and practiced on how to prevent, protect/mitigate, prepare for, and respond to all threats and hazards. This requires a role for citizens in personal preparedness, exercises, ongoing volunteer programs, and surge capacity response. Specific capabilities for UNIVERSAL preparedness, including knowledge of all-hazards (technological, natural, and terrorist incidents) and related protective measures, skills, and supplies, will be determined through a collaborative process with emergency responders.
- ***The Pet Preparedness Micro-Chip Project brought together community partners to address in real time a viable solution to educate the public in pet preparedness that in turn alleviated concerns stemming from a deficiency in the current infrastructure of our emergency shelter response. Plans are all too often designed for convenience and not practicality. When practical realities are avoided, then alternative strategies need to be developed to ensure the public that their special needs are not being ignored. This project addressed that issue.***



Figure 7: After Action Hot Wash MRC Appreciation Cake

Section 4: Conclusion

Pets have become an integral part of our lives. Plans that do not contain a realistic approach to the bond formed between pet owners and their animals are deficient. Projects such as the one conducted here provide alternative solutions to preparedness plans which ignore this basic tenant. While micro-chipping may not be the most cost effective solution it is one viable resolution to pet owner's apprehension about being separated from their pets during natural or manmade disasters.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

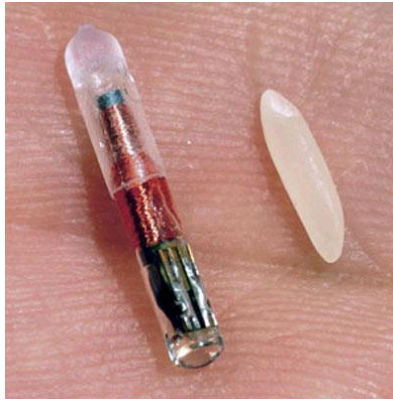
This Improvement Plan has been developed specifically for The Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corp Pet preparedness Micro-Chip Project. These recommendations draw on both the After Action Report and the After Action Conference.

Capability	Observation	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Community Preparedness and Participation	Lack of access to detailed statistic regarding special needs population in Lawrence County impeded full saturation of intended clientele for the micro-chip project.	The Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps needs to pursue an active campaign to promote a detailed assessment of Lawrence County's special needs/at risk populations	Individual meeting with major business leaders and public agencies are to be scheduled. These will be designed with promotional materials to help such organizations design a workplace mitigation plan that best suits their needs.	Planning	Lawrence County Medical Reserve Corps	MRC Coordinator	October 26, 2010	November 1, 2011

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APPENDIX B

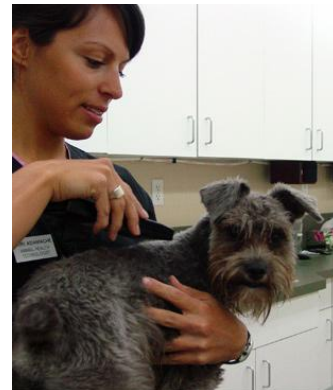
WHAT IS A PET MICRO CHIP?



In Katrina's aftermath, thousands of pets were left stranded and woefully separated from owners. The problem highlighted the need for a permanent identification system to reunite animal with master. Microchip implants offer one solution. In addition to tags, microchips theoretically provide a surefire, permanent identification method for pets. Dog nappers can easily remove dog tags, but it would take a difficult surgical procedure to remove a microchip. A microchip is no bigger than a grain of rice, and veterinarians can implant the chips into all kinds of pets -- from reptiles and birds to cats and dogs. The device carries a number, and this number is plugged into a database that includes the name and contact information of a pet's owner.



Micro-chipping



It's always sad to see a flyer stapled to a signpost or on a bulletin board at the grocery

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store with a picture of a lost pet. You imagine a child waiting for the phone to ring, hoping that some kind person happens to find his kitty and see his flyer. Sadly, once a pet is lost, the odds are against her finding her way home again. According to the American Humane Association, only about seventeen percent of lost dogs and two percent of cats ever find their way back from shelters to their original owners. Almost 9.6 million pets are euthanized every year because their owners can't be found. There are ways to beat these odds though, and they involve using nametags, collars and microchips. To give your pet the best chance to be identified, no matter how far she roams, have her implanted with a microchip and wear an updated nametag.

Besides providing your contact information, a collar and nametag notifies others that your pet is domesticated and strangers are more likely to assist your pet in finding her home. Since tags can fade, rust, or get scratched and become impossible to read, AAHA suggests inspecting your pet's tags and collars once a month. If the tags become unreadable or outdated, it is important to immediately replace it with a new nametag with your current contact information.

Although tags and collars are important, they can tear or slip off. With microchipping, on the other hand, a veterinarian injects a tiny computer chip—about the size of a grain of rice—just under your pet's skin, between the shoulder blades. A number on the microchip is entered into an international database, like the Central Animal Registry or PETtrac. If your dog or cat is found, any animal hospital, shelter, or humane society can use a microchip reader to read the unique ID number contained on the chip. The veterinarian or worker can access the database by inputting the number given off by the microchip. The chip can't be lost or damaged, and it lasts for the pet's lifetime. However, it is your responsibility as the pet owner to update your contact information.

The microchip is convenient, safe, and reliable. Though many veterinarians and animal shelters are actively working to inform their clients about microchipping, there are still a number of myths keeping pet owners from microchipping their pets.

The myth:

It's going to hurt my pet to get the chip implanted.

The truth:

The procedure is simple, routine, and painless, and it doesn't require any anesthesia. Your pet simply gets an injection just under the loose skin between the shoulder blades; it's a lot like getting vaccinated. Most animals don't react at all.

The myth:

They couldn't possibly give every pet with a microchip a unique number. My pet's number will be duplicated.

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The truth:

The way technology works today, these tiny microchips can hold huge amounts of information. In fact, the microchips are designed to produce 275 billion different identification numbers. On top of that, manufacturers add unique product and manufacturer's codes to identify their chips. With all the possible combinations of ID numbers, there are more than enough numbers to make sure every pet has a completely unique number.

The myth:

Most shelters and veterinarians don't have microchip readers, so they won't be able to identify my pet.

The truth:

It's true that a microchip won't work to identify your pet unless your pet comes in contact with a microchip reader. There are few shelters and veterinarians in the US today that don't have readers. (In Canada, almost all the animal control services and veterinarians have readers.) The main microchip manufacturers offer universal microchip readers to humane societies, shelters, and veterinarians for free or for a small fee. Until recently, each brand of microchip could only be read by its own brand of microchip reader. Recently, though, universal readers that read all brands of microchips have been made available to the shelter community. Ask your veterinarian, your nearby humane society or shelter, or the animal control department in your area whether they have microchip readers readily available. If not, encourage them to get the readers. Of course, to be sure your pets will be returned to you, you should identify them with an updated tag and a microchip.

The myth:

Eventually, the microchip will wear out and I'll have to have it replaced.

The truth:

The chip doesn't have an internal battery or power source. Most of the time it is inactive. When the microchip reader is passed over it, it gets enough power from the reader to transmit the pet's ID number. Since there's no battery and no moving parts, there's nothing to wear out or replace. The microchip will last throughout your pet's lifetime. However, it is your responsibility as the pet owner to update your pet's microchip every time you change addresses or phone numbers.

The myth:

My cat never goes outside. She doesn't need to have a microchip ID.

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The truth:

It's wonderful that you're keeping your pet safe inside, but a guest or a repair person could easily leave the door hanging open, or a screen could come loose from an open window. Unaltered pets in particular will take any chance to roam. There's a possibility that your house could be damaged in heavy storm, flood, or other natural disaster, causing your cat to run away in fear. Pets can even be stolen-particularly birds and exotic or purebred animals. No matter how closely you watch your favorite animal friend, there's always a chance she could get out, and if she doesn't have any ID, it will be extremely hard to find her.

The myth:

If someone else ever tries to claim my pet, the microchip ID number won't hold up in court.

The truth:

A microchip ID number is unique, it can't be changed, and it links a pet to its owner through an international database. It works a lot like the serial numbers that link vehicles, stereos, TV sets, and other valuable possessions to their owners. The American and Canadian Kennel Clubs have recognized microchipping as definitive proof of a dog's identity and ownership, and accept microchip identification to register purebred dogs. If you own a very valuable pet, or if you're afraid there might be a question about who has custody of your pet, microchip identification could be a big help.

The myth:

It's not safe for my dog to have a foreign object inside his body.

The truth:

Any foreign material injected carries some risks. However, the risks of are extremely minimal compared to the risk of your pet becoming lost. Veterinarians have been implanting microchips in animals for years, and the process has been proven to be very safe. The chip is made out of an inert, biocompatible substance, which means it won't cause an allergic reaction in your furry friend, and it won't degenerate over time. The first versions of the microchip would sometimes migrate from where they were injected, but manufacturers now design the chips with antimigrating properties. When they're implanted properly, today's chips won't migrate. Once they're in place, they won't move around or get near any delicate tissues or organs. You can help make sure the microchip heals securely by keeping your pet calm and quiet for the 24 hours following injection. Because the microchip is placed just under the skin and not internally, microchip reading is completely safe as well.

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Microchipping is safe, effective, durable, and dependable, but it can't absolutely guarantee that a lost pet will be found. The best way to keep your pet safe is to use more than one form of identification. Microchips are long lasting and a wonderful means of identification, but there is a chance a shelter won't have a reader, so a tattoo would be an effective backup form of identification. If kind strangers find your dog in the street, on the other hand, they won't have a reader handy to check for a microchip and won't know where to call to match a animal's tattoo to an owner. A tag with your name and address would let them bring your pet right back to your door. Another possibility would be a tag that informs readers that your pet has been microchipped and/or tattooed and gives them the number to call to reach the ID number database. There's always the possibility that one kind of identification could fail, but if your pet has two or three kinds of ID, there's a good chance that at least one will help bring her home to you. Talk to your veterinarian about how to provide the best identification for your pet.

In a perfect world, leashes, fences, and doors would be enough to keep your pet safe at home. In the real world, accidents happen, and your pet depends on you to protect her against the things that could go wrong. With a little effort now, you can take a big step toward ensuring that your furry friend will be with you in the future.