

Government of the District of Columbia
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

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Dr. Bennett and Mr. Lamb

On behalf of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 4B, I write to formally convey the Commission's concerns regarding the provision of animal care and control services in the District of Columbia under the current contract between the District of Columbia Department of Health (DC Health) and the Brandywine Valley Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BVSPCA).

The DOH Environmental Health Administration, Division of Animal Services, is responsible for overseeing animal shelters and animal control in the District. For many years prior to 2023, these services were provided by Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA) under contract with DC Health. In 2023, following a competitive procurement process, DC Health awarded the Animal Care and Control contract to BVSPCA, which officially assumed responsibility for these services in January 2025.

On August 20, 2025, the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor issued a [report](#) entitled "DC Health Did Not Adequately Monitor Animal Shelter Contract." The Auditor found significant failures in DC Health's oversight of its prior contract with HRA, including inadequate inspections of shelter conditions, insufficient assurance of animal exercise and cleanliness, excessive delays in resolving dangerous dog cases, failure to enforce animal control violations, and noncompliance with statutory requirements for low-cost spay and neuter services. The Auditor further concluded that weak oversight and insufficient performance monitoring posed risks to animal welfare, public safety, and fiscal accountability, and emphasized that these findings and

recommendations apply to all current and future animal care and control contracts, including the present contract with BVSPCA.

ANC 4B has also been alerted to multiple reports from District residents, raising concerns regarding BVSPCA's service delivery. These include delayed responses to calls involving stray or injured animals; advising residents to release stray dogs rather than providing aid; lack of diligence in responding to dog attacks or dangerous dog incidents; and reports of poor conditions at the BVSPCA shelter in Southwest DC, including insufficient food, water, and enrichment. The Commission is further concerned that the current contract does not require acceptance of owner surrenders, leaving families facing hardship without humane options for their pets.

Taken together, the findings of the District Auditor and the reported experiences of residents raise the questions below to you and the DOH.

1. What specific performance metrics and service-level standards are included in the current Animal Care and Control contract with BVSPCA, and how do they differ from those in the prior contract with Humane Rescue Alliance?
2. Does the contract establish mandatory response-time thresholds for stray animals, injured animals, dog attacks, or dangerous dog investigations? If so, how are these measured and enforced?
3. What financial penalties, corrective action plans, or termination provisions exist if BVSPCA fails to meet contractual benchmarks?
4. Has DC Health issued any notices of non-compliance, corrective action plans, or warnings to BVSPCA since the contract began? If so, what issues were identified and how were they resolved?
5. What minimum shelter care standards are required under the contract for food, water, sanitation, enrichment, veterinary care, temperature control, and staffing ratios?
6. Does the current contract require BVSPCA to accept owner surrenders? If not, what alternatives are provided to residents facing eviction, hospitalization, domestic violence, or other emergencies?
7. What is DC Health's current oversight framework for monitoring BVSPCA's compliance, including frequency of site visits, inspections, and performance reviews?
8. Are shelter inspections conducted announced or unannounced, and how often do they occur?
9. What internal DC Health staff positions are responsible for contract monitoring, and are those positions fully staffed and trained?
10. How does DC Health ensure coordination between BVSPCA, MPD, and other agencies in cases involving serious injury or public safety risks?
11. How does DC Health ensure that the oversight deficiencies identified by the DC Auditor are not repeated under the current contract?
12. How does DC Health verify compliance with District animal welfare laws requiring humane treatment and adequate care?
13. Will DC Health commit to publishing quarterly performance reports or dashboards so residents can independently assess service quality?
14. Will DC Health support the creation of an independent animal welfare oversight function, such as within the Office of the Inspector General, with authority to conduct unannounced inspections?
15. What steps will DC Health and the Council take to ensure that future animal care and control contracts incorporate stronger oversight, clearer performance standards, and enforceable accountability mechanisms?

16. Does BVSPCA maintain daily written or electronic logs documenting animal care, enrichment, and veterinary treatment, and are these records reviewed by DC Health?
17. How many requests for owner surrenders or stray animal intake have been declined or redirected, and on what basis?
18. What outreach or coordination exists with community-based organizations to prevent abandonment or unsafe release of animals?
19. What are the average response and resolution times for dog attacks and dangerous dog investigations under the current contract?
20. How are dangerous dog cases tracked, escalated, and closed, and what oversight exists to prevent excessive delays similar to those identified by the Auditor?
21. What data does BVSPCA report regularly to DC Health regarding intake numbers, response times, bite investigations, shelter population, outcomes, and complaints?
22. Is any of this data made publicly available, and if not, why?

Given the seriousness of the concerns raised, the Commission urges prompt and transparent action. The findings of any independent review, as well as responses to the questions identified herein, should be made publicly available and will be presented at a future ANC 4B public meeting to ensure meaningful community oversight and accountability. District residents deserve clear assurance that animal care and control services are being delivered humanely, effectively, and in full compliance with the law.

If you require further information from me, I can be reached at 4b06@anc.dc.gov.

Sincerely,

Tiffani Nichole Johnson, JD, Notary Public
Vice Chair, ANC 4B
Treasurer, ANC 4B
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