

## SHOULD YOU VACCINATE YOUR OWN PETS?

We are often asked the question, “Can I vaccinate my pet myself with an over-the-counter vaccine?” The answer is that you are free to choose what level of care you wish to provide for your pet.

### **We do not recommend owner-administered vaccinations for the following reasons:**

- Written instructions provided with over-the-counter vaccines cannot adequately educate you on proper vaccine administration. Would you vaccinate your own child for measles if the pharmacist provided you with the vaccine and syringe?
- Injury to yourself or others can occur because of lack of training. Children can pick up a needle and stick themselves, or you may be bitten while attempting to vaccinate your pet.
- Vaccines purchased over-the-counter are often improperly handled and thus ineffective. You have NO control over the handling of the vaccine before you purchased it. Veterinarians know where their biologics come from and choose them based on effectiveness and handling.
- Vaccination schedules must be individualized for each pet depending on breed, time of year, and area of the country. There is NO set vaccination schedule that is the best for all pets we see. The program must be individualized for each individual pet to develop its best protection.
- Vaccines administered to an unhealthy animal may be ineffective, or even harm the pet. No pet should be vaccinated without a prior **PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** performed by a licensed veterinarian skilled in diagnosing potential problems.
- Severe **ALLERGIC REACTIONS** (Anaphylaxis) may occur following routine vaccine administration. Pet owners are not equipped to handle this complication.
- Syringes and Needles are considered **HAZARDOUS MEDICAL WASTE**. Disposal of such items can lead to devastating consequences.
- **PETS NEED REGULAR VETERINARY CARE**. Just as your child needs regular check-ups, your pet does, too! Puppies and kittens should be examined every time during the initial vaccination series to ensure proper growth, diet, parasite control, and behavior. Adult dogs and cats should have a complete physical examination every year. Early detection of tumors, diseases, and parasites helps ensure a better life for your pet and your family. The health and well-being of your companion animals and the promotion of responsible pet ownership are our primary concerns.

**WE CARE!!**