

## Wisconsin Animal Shelter Sequesters Sick Dogs

**Bacterial outbreak of unknown origin kills seven dogs and sickens two in Waukesha.**

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The dog kennels at a Wisconsin animal shelter are closed off to the public after a bacterial outbreak struck the dogs in early May, killing seven dogs and sickening two. The illness that led to the sequestering of all 40 dogs at Waukesha County Humane Society is streptococcus zooepidemicus bacterium, according to spokeswoman Jennifer Smieja.

The illness does not appear to be contagious to humans and no members of the shelter staff were affected.

Visitors are able to access other areas of the shelter for viewing and adoption of small animals including cats, kittens and rabbits. The dog ward, however, remains under watch for three weeks while the dogs undergo treatment with antibiotics, Smieja said.

"They are not leaving their kennels at all," she said. "It's kind of scary, we don't have any dogs coming in or going out."

The sick dogs came down with fevers of 106 to 107 degrees and had difficulty breathing. According to Smieja, the sick dogs are showing signs of an "amazing" recovery.

Still, they remain confined and are not allowed to go outside. To make sure the dogs stay occupied, the staff keeps them active with rawhide chews and squeaky dog toys.

It was not known where the bacteria originated from, Smieja said. The spread of the canine respiratory disease mirrors the outbreaks of the Miami-Dade Animal Shelter in February and the Lied Animal Shelter in Las Vegas in February 2007, according to shelter staff.

"That's the mystery of it all, we don't know where the bacteria came from," Smieja said. "We still just don't have enough information."

In the meantime, she said shelter staff is going well beyond the normal cleaning procedures. A planned expansion of the facility will include separate medical wards for dogs and cats, an adoption area, and a holding area to prevent the potential spread of disease.

The shelter is at 701 Northview Road in Waukesha, Wis.

For more information, call 262-542-8851 or visit [www.hawspets.org](http://www.hawspets.org)