**What is meant by high-quality, high-volume surgery? Are the time-saving surgical techniques used considered acceptable standard of care?**

High-quality, high-volume spay/neuter programs (HQHVSN) are efficient surgical initiatives that meet or exceed current veterinary medical standards of care in providing accessible, targeted sterilization of large numbers of dogs and cats in order to reduce their overpopulation and subsequent euthanasia. The number one cause of death of healthy dogs and cats is euthanasia due to overpopulation.

HQHVSN clinics adhere to medical standards set by the HQHVSN Task Force, a 22-member panel of expert veterinarians. Standards are comprehensive and include preoperative evaluation, pain relief, anesthetic protocols, monitoring, aseptic technique, surgical technique, post-operative supportive care and more.

**What is Humane Alliance?**

Humane Alliance started as a small spay/neuter clinic in Asheville, NC in 1994. It is now a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that focuses on high-quality, high-volume, low-cost companion animal sterilization. They provide curricula for veterinary students, private practice veterinarians, veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, and administrators and were critical in helping us establish our clinic through their mentoring

**How can you offer surgery so cheap? Do you have to cut corners?**

We have streamlined our procedures to perform a large number of surgeries per day which reduces our overhead costs per animal. Our surgeons are experts at these surgeries and can perform them at maximum efficiency without any compromise on quality or standard of care. Our medical support staff are highly trained individuals that specialize in caring for the animals efficiently while also providing superior anesthetic monitoring and surgical recovery.

**Will your clinic take business away from other veterinary practices?**

Private practices often report performing more spay/neuter after HQHVSN programs enter their communities. Marketing promotes the benefits of spay/neuter to clients who use private practice veterinarians and creates a “bandwagon” effect making spay/neuter more socially desirable to pet owners.

HQHVSN programs target individuals that do not otherwise use veterinary services. Humane Alliance reports that of their clients 89% have never taken any companion animals to a veterinarian. HQHVSN programs target this population, and at the same time educate owners about the importance of on-going veterinary care for their animal. This increases the likelihood that owners will seek care for their pets after spay/neuter through veterinary clinics in the area.

**Does every animal get a new sterile pack and new sterile suture?**

Surgery is performed on every animal with a new sterile pack, a new sterile suture package and scalpel blade, and the surgeon follows all standard sterile surgical prep and procedures.

**Are all your surgeries performed by a licensed veterinarian?**

All surgeries are performed by a licensed veterinarian and all anesthesia is administered by licensed veterinary technicians. Veterinary technicians and assistants are only permitted to assist as allowed per Washington state codes: WAC 246-935-040 and 246-935-050.

**Is it safe to do surgery on pediatric animals?**

Studies have been conducted that show that pediatric spay/neuter is safe and effective in both the short and long term. Detailed information on pediatric spay/neuter can be viewed at [aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org/pediatric-spayneuter.php) including definitions, history, common concerns, special pointers, and advantages of pediatric spay/neuter.

Our minimum age/weight for surgery animals is: 4-5 months for puppies and 2 lbs. for kittens.

**What anesthetic protocol do you use? Are pain meds provided?**

Our anesthetic protocol has been established by Humane Alliance who has it periodically reviewed by board-certified anesthesiologists. Pain meds are provided to all animals pre-operatively and post-operatively and optional pain meds are available to owners to take home after surgery.

Please contact us if you would like any specific information on our anesthetic protocol.

**Do you require pre-operative blood work or any other health requirements?**

We strongly recommend pre-operative blood work for animals 7 years or older. Since we cater to more low-income clients, they often cannot afford to go have blood work done. If this is the case, and the veterinarian determines that the animal otherwise looks healthy, then we will allow surgery as long as the owner signs a high risk waiver. We will also may require such a waiver for other conditions such as obesity, respiratory infection, heart murmurs, skin disease, or any other medical issue that may increase the risk of anesthesia or surgery. Our veterinarians will decline surgery to any animal that they deem not healthy enough or that has too much risk for complications during or after surgery.

**How can you remove everything with such a small incision? Do you perform OHE or OE?**

We perform a full ovariohysterectomy on every female animal. We are able to do so usually through a very small incision due to years of experience doing these surgeries. Our veterinarians have done tens of thousands of such surgeries and they have developed the ability to make small incisions due to optimum incision placement and expert tissue handling.

**What is the green line on the abdomen?**

A tattoo is given to every animal we sterilize which will result in a small (about 1 cm) faint green line on the abdomen near, but not in, the incision. This is done with a simple scoring of the skin, placement of sterile tattoo ink in the score, and then gluing the score closed. Initially the tattoo may appear much darker or larger immediately after surgery due to ink smearing, but this will wear off and eventually be a small, faint line. We feel it is important to have a readily recognizable way to identify that an animal is already sterilized to prevent unnecessary surgery in the future.

**Do you provide general medical care for privately-owned animals?**

We do not perform preventative health or wellness services to the general public. We encourage our clients to establish a relationship with a full-service veterinarian for routine preventative health care.

**Do you see animals post-op for rechecks?**

We do prefer to see our animals for rechecks when needed and will do so on Tuesdays through Saturdays when we have a veterinarian on site. For any concerns that come up when we are not open, you will need to contact your regular full service veterinarian or PEC.

**What do you do to prevent disease transmission?**

Disease prevention for all animals is very important to us. Like any other animal hospital, while it is impossible to guarantee that an animal will never contract a contagious disease while at our clinic, we do everything we can to minimize this possibility. We clean and disinfect tables and equipment between each animal, change anesthetic tubing between the different populations of animals, clean cages between every animal, separate those who seem to have a contagious infection and similar disease prevention techniques.

We are also sure to use appropriate disinfectants depending on the situation. We most commonly use Trifectant (potassium peroxymonosulfate) due to its broad spectrum of activity including against calicivirus, parvovirus, and panleukopenia. We will also use bleach if ringworm is suspected, and use chlorhexidine for our surgical tubes and equipment.