

# Florida Veterinary Corps

## *Call for Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians*

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Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

# Rationale

- Protecting agriculture in Florida begins locally and requires cooperation, participation, and partnership.
- Federal or other outside assistance to deal with an animal disease emergency may not be available for hours or days.
- Animal agriculture in Florida is highly vulnerable to severe disruption and financial loss through natural disasters and exotic or zoonotic diseases.
- Counties and state agencies must be prepared to respond to animal disasters through planning and identification of human and material resources.
- Natural disasters are unpredictable and cannot be prevented.
- Florida has a high risk for introduction of a foreign animal disease.

# Cooperative Effort



# Why a Florida Veterinary Corps?

- Established to enlist veterinarians and veterinary technicians who are willing to volunteer their services in responding to animal emergencies in the state of Florida.
- Volunteers work within an incident command structure under State ESF 17 (Chapter 252, F.S.) as part of the State Emergency Response Team



# Why a Florida Veterinary Corps?

- Volunteers may serve in:
  - veterinary infrastructure assessment teams,
  - triage or emergency animal treatment teams, and
  - animal disease surveillance or control teams under an incident command system.



# Obligation of Corps Volunteers

- Only serve when activated by state ESF 17.
- Corp volunteers must complete the following four (4) Incident Command System trainings to be eligible to apply for The Corps.
  - IS-100.C: Introduction to Incident Command System
  - IS-200.C: Basic ICS for Initial Response
  - IS-700.B: National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction
  - IS-800.D: National Response Framework, An Introduction

# Online Application

- Hosted on the FVMA website
- Accessible via Florida SART Website

[www.FLSART.org](http://www.FLSART.org)





# Consent

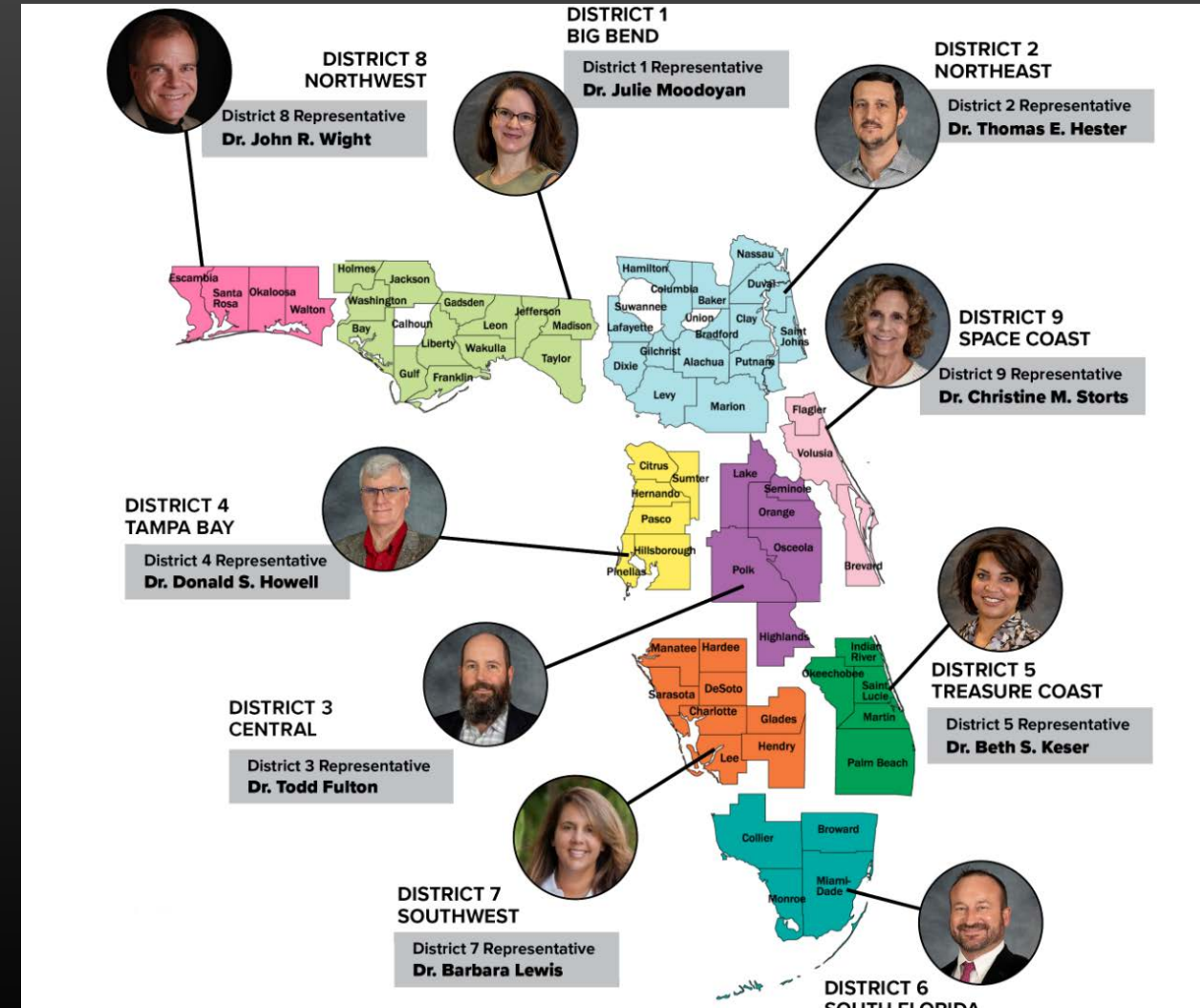
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- Volunteer service will not be compensated.
- Volunteers shall comply with all applicable department and agency rules and serve under the incident command structure established in response to an emergency.
- Volunteers called upon may decline service at any time.
- Volunteers are covered by state liability protection in accordance with Chapter 768.28, F.S., and by Worker's Compensation in accordance with Chapter 440, F.S.



# Plans in the works...

- Refined application process
- New marketing materials and brochures
- Expansion with FVMA districts – to connect, communicate, and share about the Florida Veterinary Corps
- Upcoming training
  - SART Full Scale Exercise 2024





## Deployed Two Mobile Veterinary Clinics

- University of Florida VETS Team (Fort Meyers/Lee County)
- Humane Society of the U.S. (Port Charlotte/Charlotte County)



# Volunteers

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- 102 Pet-Friendly Shelters opened pre-landfall.
- Enrolled 174 new volunteers into and deployed 86 volunteers from the ESF 17 Florida Veterinary Corps.



# Out of state vets able to enroll during disaster!

Hurricane Ian –

*“If you are a veterinarian holding an out-of-state license wishing to come to Florida and volunteer with Hurricane Ian relief efforts, the Florida Board of Veterinary Medicine has a temporary veterinarian license available.”*

# Joint Messaging

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## The Florida Veterinary Corps is Recruiting Volunteers to Help Support Veterinary Professionals and Protect Our State!

The FVMA is assisting the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in recruiting volunteers post Hurricane Ian. The FVMA serves as the point of contact for calling volunteers after a disaster. You can agree to be listed as a Florida Veterinary Corps volunteer, a helper in times of need for your fellow veterinary professionals.



Florida Department of  
Agriculture and  
Consumer Services



# Joint Messaging

A graphic with a light beige background. At the top left is the Florida DBPR logo. At the top right is the FVMA logo. In the center, a brown dog's head is visible, holding a white sign. The sign contains the text: "Florida Veterinary Corps Seeks Volunteers" and "DBPR is encouraging veterinarians and veterinary technicians to apply with the Florida Volunteer Corps, a group of volunteers that will assist in animal rescue and well-being during the aftermath of Hurricane Ian." At the bottom left is the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services logo. At the bottom right is a red heart with a white cross and a small grey dog silhouette.

A screenshot of a Facebook post from the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation. The post text reads: "Out-of-state veterinarians who wish to come to Florida to provide relief veterinary services can apply for a 30-day temporary license. #DBPR Emergency Order 2022-02 (<https://bit.ly/3rrBzyt>) waives the application fee. Apply now at <https://bit.ly/3r1BCw4>. Florida licensed veterinarians interested in offering volunteer services should contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Vet Corps at <https://bit.ly/3dWYmPQ> or 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352) for information." Below the text is a pink banner with the text "Licensed Out-of-State Veterinarians Needed in Florida!" and a photo of a dog with a stethoscope around its neck. The bottom of the screenshot shows the Facebook navigation bar.

# Hurricane Ian Response Ft. Myers

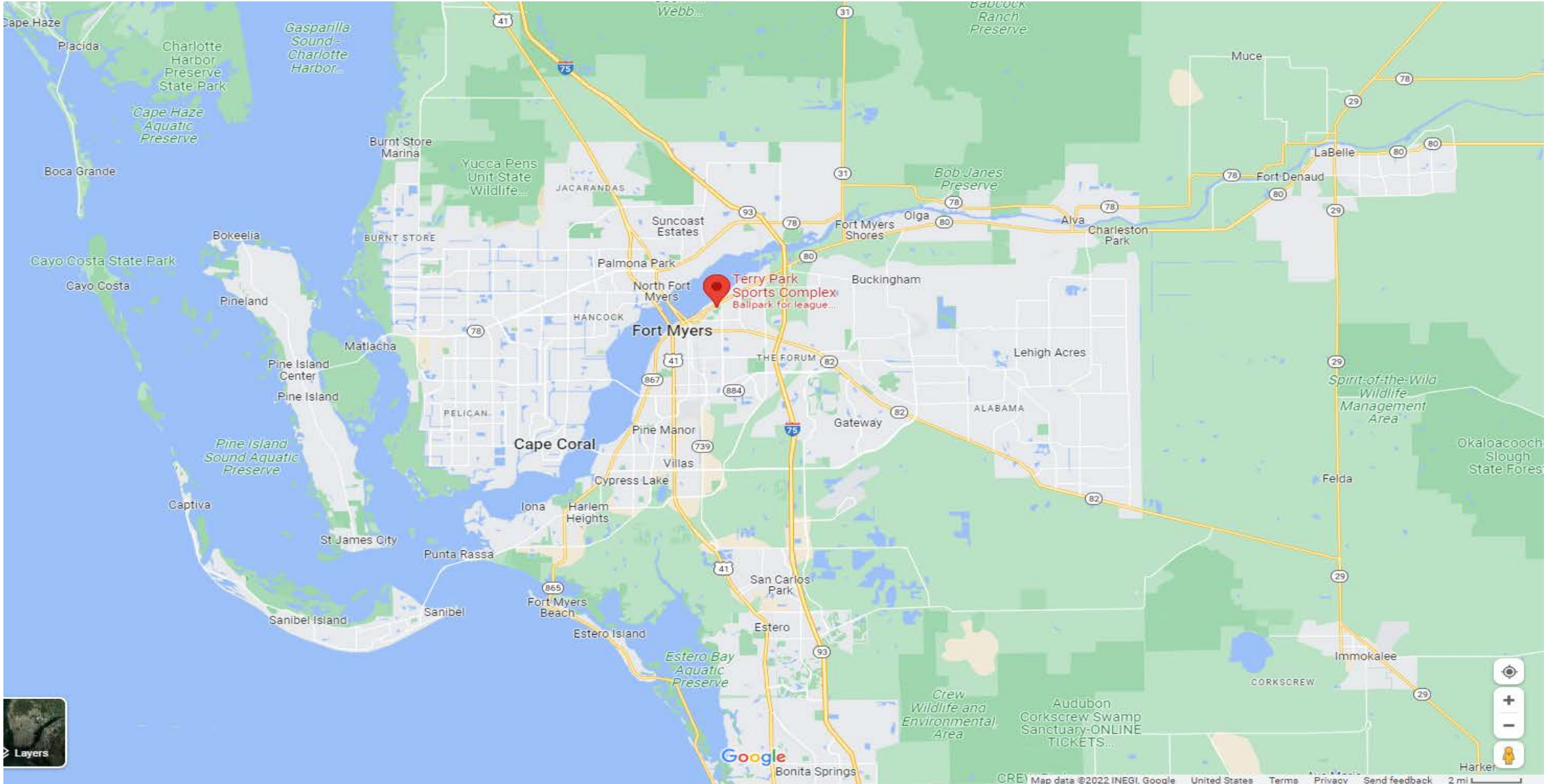
**Dr. Lawrence Garcia, MS, DVM**

Clinical Assistant Professor in Shelter Medicine & Surgery

Service Chief, Veterinary Community Outreach program

Medical Director, Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service Team

# Field Hospital Location

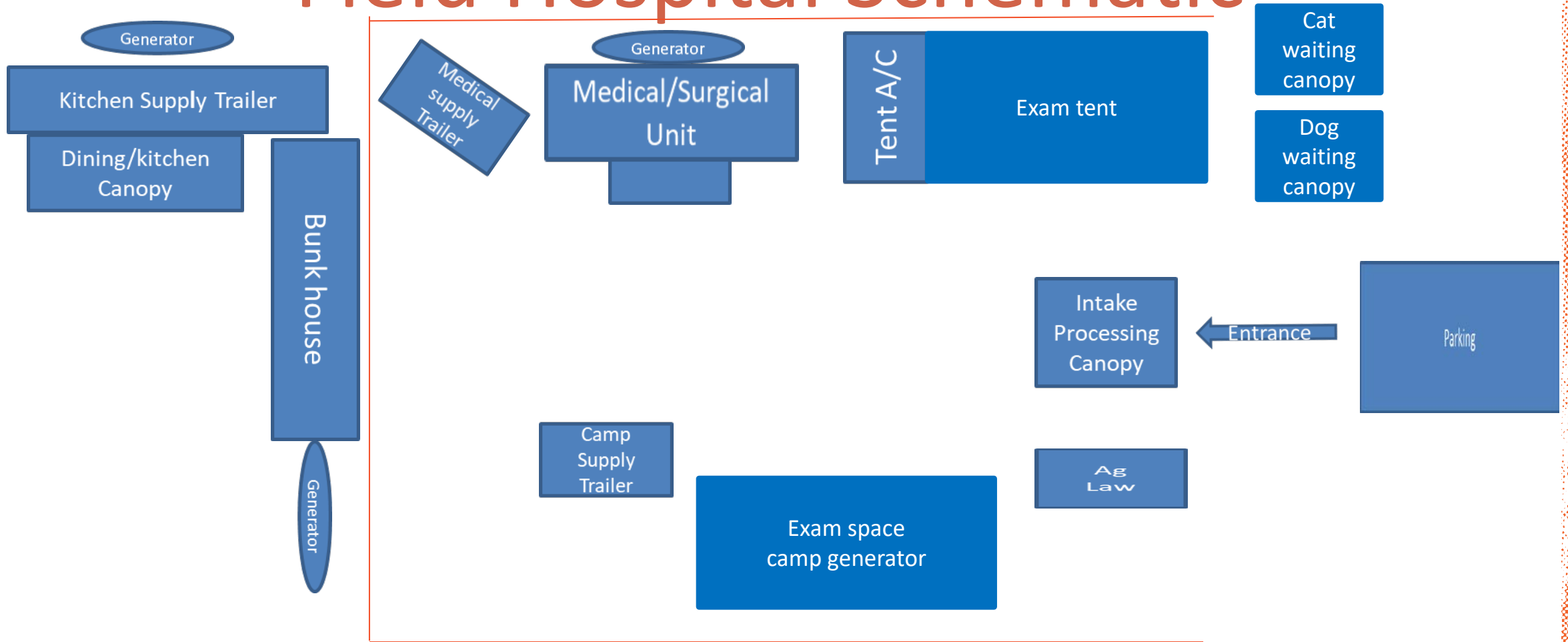




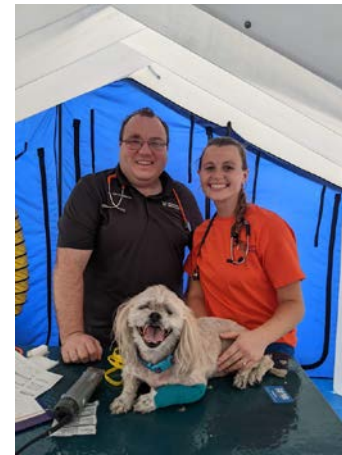
# Terry park Sports complex



# Field Hospital Schematic



# Deployable field Hospital



# Partners

- State ESF-17 & County ESF-17
- UF Faculty, staff and students
- Florida Veterinary Medical & Florida Veterinary Technician Associations
  - Volunteers
  - Resources
  - Local veterinary practices and practitioners
- UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
- Local veterinary practitioners
- Pharmaceutical distributors
- Local pharmacies
- Regional animal medical emergency facilities



# Case Presentations

- Gastrointestinal-vomiting/Diarrhea/upset stomach/not eating
  - Saltwater intoxication/flood water/toxin ingestion/stress
- Skin & Ears
  - Allergies/abrasion/laceration/bite wounds
- Limb injuries/pain
  - Hit by car/debris/trapped in flood waters/attempts to escape damaged structures
- Respiratory- sneeze/reverse sneeze/coughing/infections
  - Toxin exposure/stress/lack of vaccination/exposure/pre-existing



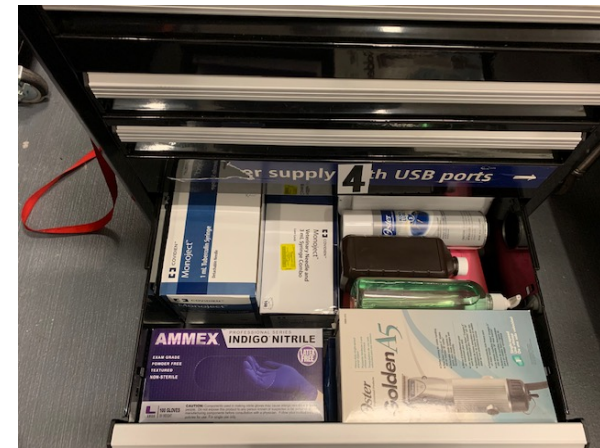
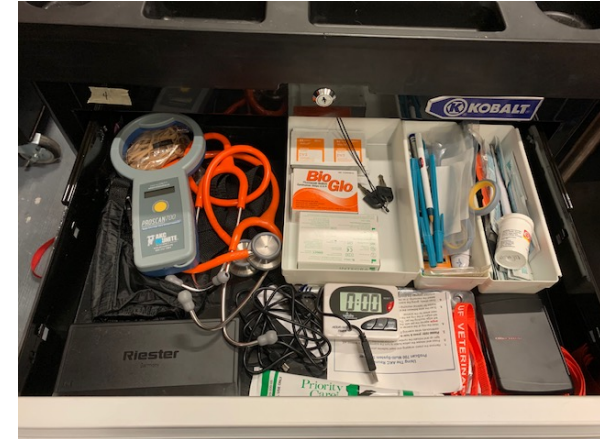
# Case Presentations

- Urinary-infection/increased frequency/not urinating/Kidney failure
  - Stress/confinement/pre-existing/underlying disease
- Ophthalmic- redness/proptosed/discharge
  - Trauma/exposure/allergy/stress
- Euthanasia
  - Injury/illness/pre-existing
- Dehydration/anorexia
  - Escape during storm & missing for days/lack of resources due to flooding



# Case Presentations

- Other presentations:
  - Anal gland abscess
  - Mass/nodule/neoplasia
  - Endocrine (cushings, diabetes, DKA)
  - Dental Injury
  - Matted hair
  - Anxiety
- Procedures:
  - Enucleation
  - Laceration repair
  - Blood transfusion



# Lessons Learned

- It was great to have so many volunteers from the college
- Connecting with the local community and veterinarians is vital
- Communication, partnerships and collaboration are key to success
- Important to include mixed animal technicians and veterinarians
- Planning to house and feed volunteers is very important
- ICS training is more important for team leadership than volunteers



# Opportunities

- Connecting with city and county governments, and engaging community and veterinarians before the event
- Better communication at the local level
- Funding mechanisms to facilitate deployment
- Mixed animal technicians and veterinarians
- Volunteer management software



# Conclusion

- Disasters can present in various forms, adaptability is key
- We must have a formal mission before deploying
- Missions can be quite variable
- Deployment location, location, location
- Work to tailor medical equipment and supply cash to meet mission needs
- Prepare for common presentations based on disaster
  - GI/trauma/toxin or flood water exposure/burns, etc.
- Always be prepared to be self sustaining +/- volunteers