QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STORYBOARD

Division/ Program:	Veterinary Public Health
Project Title:	Reduce Bite Report Duplicates
Project Timeline:	2022-2023
QI Specialist(s):	Allison Joyce, Radhika Desai, Minerva Herrera-Medina

1. Getting Started

Almost all animal bites to humans are legally reportable to Veterinary Public Health (VPH) in Los Angeles County. Reports can come directly from the victim, or from agencies such as animal control, animal shelters, veterinary clinics, and hospitals. As a result, VPH receives anywhere from 7,000 to 13,000 bite reports every year. Most of these are from dogs to humans.

2. Assemble the Team

Allison Joyce, Radhika Desai, and Minerva Herrera-Medina were the QI specialists for this project.

3. Define the Problem/ AIM Statement

While cleaning the animal bite data in preparation for the annual state report, 88 duplicate bite reports were identified. Duplicates can occur frequently as VPH can get reports of the same incident from two or more different agencies, sometimes weeks apart.

4. Examine the Current Approach

Processing the bite reports already has several checks in place to prevent duplicates including: sorting the received bite reports by victim name and bite date, and cross-checking reports received with historical ones in a filing cabinet.

5. Identify Potential Solutions

Analysis of the 88 duplicates found in 2021 revealed 30% were unpreventable under the current process. The remaining 70% were preventable with the most common errors being 1) the duplicate was not caught despite matching bite date and the file cabinet search, and 2) cases not being appropriately linked in IRIS. Small amounts of errors were noted during the sorting process and with data entry.

6. PLAN

To test a process of discussing the importance of preventing duplicates with the office staff, as well as providing an infographic that details the process of preventing duplicates.

7. DO

The week following the intervention resulted in zero catchable duplicates, and all cases were appropriately linked in IRIS. There was one instance of a duplicate report, but the initial report did not have a bite date so it would not have been caught in the filing cabinet check.

8. STUDY

This intervention appeared to work in the short-term evaluation time. Based on the 2021 duplicate analysis, there was an average of 1.69 duplicates/unlinkages per week, while there were none in the week following the intervention.

9. ACT

It was challenging to overcome the notion "duplicates will happen". While it is true we cannot expect to eliminate all duplicates, our analysis revealed 70% of the duplicates were catchable under the existing SOP and revealed gaps in understanding or differences in how conducting the SOP. Having an open discussion with office staff, going through the process, explain the importance of catching duplicates, and providing an infographic helped to reduce the amount of duplicates in the following week.

10. Next Steps

Going forward, we will discuss the importance of catching duplicates with new staff and provide them with the infographic. The number of duplicates received will be monitored every year.