**ER Services to Authorize for Foster Kittens**

Below is a template we’ve created to help on-call managers authorize services when a foster kitten goes to the emergency room. The foster parent may not elect services or diagnostics without the authorization of the on-call manager or appropriate shelter contact first. Likewise, if a shelter does not have the funds for emergency visits and/or permits foster parents to cover ER costs, this document will help them to elect services appropriately. These guidelines assume a shelter is working with quite limited resources. This is not intended to be an exhausted list, but an overview of some of the more commonly needed or requested services, diagnostics, and treatments.

**Kittens 2 weeks and under**

* **Services:**
	+ Physical exam
		- All kittens must receive a physical exam before the veterinarian can recommend a course of treatment or perform a service (like euthanasia).
	+ Euthanasia
		- Euthanasia is an appropriate course of action when the prognosis is poor and/or the necessary resources (funds, people) needed to provide specialized care are not available.
* **Diagnostics/Treatments:**
	+ Parvo test
		- If a kitten is exhibiting symptoms consistent with panleukopenia, it’s important to test the kitten, so the proper measures can be taken regarding the other kittens in the litter and the shelter can be notified as soon as possible in order to protect the other kittens/cats in care.
	+ Fluids, amoxicillin, correct body temperature
		- Ideally, a kitten should have already been “warmed up” by the foster parent if it had a low body temperature, and received sub-q fluids, Karo syrup, amoxicillin, etc. if outlined in medical protocols.
		- If they haven’t been provided, you could authorize a physical exam and depending on prognosis, warm kitten, fluids and amoxicillin. However, if the veterinarian wants to warm up the kitten only, ask the foster parent to do this at home, and do not authorize the charge.
		- Only authorize tube feedings if you have a foster parent who is willing to learn and able to do them at home.

**Kittens 2-5 weeks**

* **Services:**
	+ Physical exam
		- All kittens must receive a physical exam before the veterinarian can recommend a course of treatment or perform a service (like euthanasia).
	+ Euthanasia
		- If your organization is particularly limited on resources (funds/people), you can treat a 2-5 week old kitten as you would a 0-2 week kitten.
* **Diagnostics/Treatments:**
	+ Parvo test
		- If a kitten is exhibiting symptoms consistent with panleukopenia, it’s important to test the kitten, so the proper measures can be taken regarding the other kittens in the litter and the shelter can be notified as soon as possible in order to protect the other kittens/cats in care.
	+ Depending on the physical exam findings, the following services could be authorized if necessary:
		- Sub-q fluids- not IV fluids
		- Blood sugar testing
		- B-12 injection
		- X-ray
			* This would depend on the cost and need. Typically, authorize only when trauma is suspected.
		- Antibiotics
			* Authorize only if the antibiotics must start immediately and cannot wait until the next morning when the shelter opens.
		- Oxygen chamber
			* This would depend on the cost and prognosis. Authorize only if it makes sense.
* **Services NOT to authorize:**
	+ Ultrasound or surgery
		- Try to have the kitten stabilized and then have your shelter veterinarian decide the best course of treatment for the kitten moving forward.

**Kittens 6 weeks and older**

* **Services:**
	+ Physical exam
		- All kittens must receive a physical exam before the veterinarian can recommend a course of treatment or perform a service (like euthanasia).
* **Diagnostics/Treatments:**
	+ Parvo test
		- If a kitten is exhibiting symptoms consistent with panleukopenia, it’s important to test the kitten, so the proper measures can be taken regarding the other kittens in the litter and the shelter can be notified as soon as possible in order to protect the other kittens/cats in care.
	+ Depending on the physical exam findings, the following services could be authorized if necessary:
		- Sub-q fluids- not IV fluids
		- Blood sugar testing
		- PCV- looks for anemia
		- B-12 injection
		- X-ray
			* This would depend on the cost and need. Typically, authorize only when trauma is suspected.
		- Antibiotics
			* Authorize only if the antibiotics must start immediately and cannot wait until the next morning when the shelter opens.
		- Oxygen chamber
			* This would depend on the cost and prognosis. Authorize only if it makes sense.
* **Services NOT to authorize:**
	+ Ultrasound or surgery
		- Try to have the kitten stabilized and then have your shelter veterinarian decide the best course of treatment for the kitten moving forward.

**Questions to ask the ER vet**

* What are the kitten’s chances of survival?
* Will this service change our course of action or the prognosis?
* What will this add to our knowledge and would it change the treatment plan?
* Is there a less expensive alternative option that would give us similar results?
* If you only had $XXX to spend, how would you spend it to find out the most valuable information?
* If you were responsible for this kitten and were working with such limited resources, how would you proceed?