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Veterinary hospitals see surge

by Claude Solnik

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Veterinary hospitals are struggling to keep up with demand from pet owners who've lost their homes as well as from pet stores and pet care centers that have lost power.

The veterinary centers are treating ill pets and boarding them for pet owners and pet shops that are without power.

[Central Veterinary Associates'](#) Valley Stream Hospital, which operates around the clock, has seen a surge in use, as demand grew around Long Island and it closed its own centers in Great Neck and Mineola, where it lost power. The company also shut centers in Belle Harbor and Far Rockaway.

"We have generators that are running. We're doing the best we can," said Peter Conevery, administrator at Central Veterinary Associates' Valley Stream Hospital. "We're getting all sorts of pets: animals getting sick from drinking water in the Long Beach area. People are bringing in animals from the street. Pet stores are bringing in animals because they have no staff, no power, especially on the South Shore."

Central Veterinary Associates President Aaron Vine said his company's staff of veterinarians is continuing to work out of the company's central hospital in Valley Stream, helping take animals that ordinarily would be served by other centers. Pet owners, particularly from southern Long Island as well as Queens, are using temporary shelters at York College and Hillcrest High School as well as veterinary centers.

"You have a lot of pet owners without power. They lost their homes, their vehicles. People love their pets, so they're going to try and get them safe," Conevery said. "They need them to be taken care of while they tend to the disaster."

Although animals are coming in from across Long Island, he said pet owners in Long Beach, Island Park, Oceanside, Atlantic Beach and Lido Beach, in particular, are placing animals at veterinary hospitals.

"Some of it is boarding, but some of these animals got hurt in the process. Some are sick," Conevery said. "We're doing the best we can. We're not at capacity yet, but we're reaching it."

Meanwhile, Conevery said he's not sure whether there has been any damage to Central Veterinary Associates' Belle Harbor clinic.

"We can't even get access to see how much, if any, damage we took on," he said.