

Case Study #2

COMPLAINT ALLEGATIONS

The Uniform Complaint alleges violation of Chapter 474 against Dr. Goodheart. The specific allegation is the violation of F.S. 474.214(1)(R), Gross Negligence/Incompetency. Specifically, on January 18th, 2015, Dr. Goodheart diagnosed the Complainant's cat, Fat Cat, with feline diabetes and began treatment of insulin injections twice daily. On February 7th, 2015, Fat Cat stopped eating and began to show signs of weakness and thirst. The next day, Fat Cat was taken to the Dr. Goodheart's clinic, where they did a glucose curve and a snap pancreatic lipase test. Also, they gave him fluids for his dehydration and sent home with anti-nausea medicine and appetite enhancing medicine to treat Fat Cat for dehydration. On February 9th, 2015, Complainant asked to have Fat Cat tested for ketones. Dr. Goodheart confirmed that it was ketoacidosis and stated that there was nothing he could do, and to take Fat Cat to Emergency Hospital. Fat Cat was transferred to Dr. Betterheart for care. Fat Cat was diagnosed with ketoacidosis and hepatic lipidosis. Complainant argues that Dr. Goodheart failed to diagnose Fat Cat and he did not run the necessary tests to diagnose or treat him causing Fat Cat pain. Fat Cat's health and condition had declined so much that he was euthanized. (NOTE: that the above allegations are per the Complainant and are NOT agreed to by Dr. Goodheart and should not be accepted as truthful.)

RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

On January 17, 2015 there was an appointment scheduled as "New client annual vaccine" but upon arrival the owner presented Fat Cat with multiple complaints and health issues all of which included vomiting, significant weight loss, trouble breathing the was described as "wheezing". The owner was concerned about kitty asthma. Fat Cat also came in with black eye discharge and possibly fleas. Fat Cat was not on any flea prevention and had not seen a veterinarian in over

FIVE (5) years with NO vaccine history. The only veterinarian visit was in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania when he was originally adopted. The service included in the “annual vaccine” visit would be getting the vaccines and FeLv/Fiv test. The owner noted that Fat Cat was fractious and unfriendly with other people. When Fat Cat was taken back to get a weight and TPR, he immediately became irritated, stressed and fractious. It was decided that the best plan of action for Fat Cat was to prescribe gabapentin and send him home and have him come back the next day and be dropped off because he would need a complete/full work up to include radiographs, blood work, and possibly fluids along with an annual complete examination. The owner was presented with an estimate that included all of this but the owner said that they could not afford the end price that was over \$500.00. Dr. Goodheart spoke with his office manager, Mario, and Mario talked to the owner and it was agreed that the owner would come back in the morning as a drop off and the work would be done, but the charge would only be 50% of the costs of the estimate and that the clinic would eat the rest. On the estimate fluids, medications to go home were not included. Owner said that they would pay for 40% of the cost of the bill and would be back the next morning. The option of going to an Emergency Hospital was also presented to the owner but they stated that they felt like Fat Cat could wait till the next morning as this has been going on for over a month’s duration.

On January 18th, Fat Cat was brought back to be seen by Dr. Goodheart. The January 18th visit consisted of a physical exam, history, radiographs, blood work, FeLv/FIV Snap test and medications/vaccinations.

On January 19th, Dr. Goodheart diagnosed Fat Cat with diabetes. There were phone communications that day wherein Dr. Goodheart talked with the owner about diabetes management and emergency situation. There was another call by the office to follow up to see

how the patient was doing. It was reported that Fat Cat was doing well but was groggy from waking up from sedation. NONE of the phone calls were documented.

On January 24th the owner came in to pick up U-40 syringes but unable to do so because of financial concerns. Some canned food was picked up on February 3rd.

On February 8th there was a phone call that Fat Cat was not getting any better, he stopped eating since yesterday and was just laying down and did nothing. Fat Cat was dropped off to be examined. Fat Cat had been vomiting for the past 2 days. The owner had not given insulin in the past 2 days. A physical examination and some tests were done. However, some testing was not done due to financial concerns with the owner. You can see the client communication in reference to the financial concerns expressed in the records. Again the assessment of Fat Cat was that she had diabetes with glucose of 565.

On February 9, Dr. Goodheart spoke to the owner and recommended that Fat Cat be taken to a 24 hour clinic. The owner then took Fat Cat to see Dr. Betterheart, where he performed an exam and testing, and saw Fat Cat had not improved and possibly was getting worse. Dr. Betterheart recommended that the best course would be hospitalization at a 24 hour hospital or humane euthanasia. Fat Cat needed 24 hour monitoring and Dr. Goodheart's clinic was not equipped to do the same. The owner opted for euthanasia and it was completed.