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THE KODIAK TAILS

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A Happy Ending to Bella's Story

KodiakCare Delivers for Tiny Maltese Who Ran Up a Big Hospital Bill

Bella arrived at Angell Animal Hospital in Boston at 5 p.m., and there was no time to wait. The tiny Maltese was suffering from pyometra, an infection of the uterus that would have killed her if left untreated. By midnight, she was out of surgery and, within a matter of hours, back to her old self. "She came back the next day and was barking like crazy, like nothing had happened," said Dr. Danielle Engel, the associate veterinarian at Angell who worked with Bella's family to save her.

Bella's recovery continues, thanks to her loving owners, the skilled vets who treated her and KodiakCare, which provided funding to ensure Bella could be saved without imposing an unaffordable financial burden on her family. Even with pet insurance, the Guillames of Boston

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faced out-of-pocket costs totaling thousands of dollars, with no time to prepare for the unexpected hardship. They were willing to go over their credit limit to save her, recalled Elmire Guillame, Bella's pet parent. "I was like, 'I have to do it,' " she said. "I wouldn't want to put my dog to sleep because I can't afford the care she needs."

However, as care became more critical, the bills became unmanageable for the Guillames. KodiakCare and Angell Hospital came to the rescue, providing \$1,500 of the \$2,755 bill, and giving Bella a new lease on life after an illness that had unfolded over a couple of weeks before the emergency surgery. When she started ailing, the Guillames had taken her to their usual vet several times for diagnostics and medication. The cost, after insurance, was "such an eye-opener," Guillame said. The final costs were shocking. "When Angell estimated the surgical bill could be as much as \$3,000. I was like, 'What? I just spent over \$1,000!'"

When Dr. Engel saw how the Guillames "were doing everything for Bella," she knew they needed KodiakCare's help. "I'm always amazed at the lengths people will go for their animals," she said. The good news was that Bella's prognosis was excellent: With the surgery, she would be back to her normal, happy self. And thanks to KodiakCare, money would not be a barrier to Bella's health.

For a family facing new financial hardships due to Covid-19, this was an invaluable gift. "I'm really grateful. It really does help in the long-run," Guillame said. The financial support from KodiakCare "shows me that people still care in this time. When things get better for me, I want to donate. I want to help someone who is in a worse position than me."

Because of the cost, she noted, "There are a lot of people who are scared to bring their dogs to a pet hospital." But for loving owners like her, forgoing treatment was an even scarier prospect. "People don't realize how close you get with your pets," she said. "She's part of your family. I would do anything for her, like I would for myself or my child."



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