



NEWS RELEASE

Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

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Rabies Prevention and Awareness Necessary with Warmer Weather

Erie County Department of Health Highlights Importance of Rabies Prevention

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) advises precaution and prevention as we approach warmer weather and head outdoors. Avoiding contact with wildlife can prevent rabies, a dangerous, always fatal disease. “Rabies prevention starts with the animal owner,” advises **Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein**. “An exposure to rabies can be fatal for a human or a pet, and vaccination of pets and other animals represents the best preventive measure available. We recommend that people vaccinate dogs, cats, ferrets, and any other animal that has regular contact with humans, such as horses.”

Rabies is caused by a virus that people and other mammals can get through certain exposures to the saliva or nervous tissue from a rabid animal and is fatal without proper post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) vaccines. In most cases, preventing rabies is as simple as ensuring adequate animal vaccination and control, avoiding contact with wild animals, and educating those at risk. Thus far in 2013, six animals have tested positive for rabies in Erie County (two raccoons, two foxes, and two bats). Last year Erie County had 42 animals test positive for rabies, while in 2011, 23 animals tested positive for rabies.

A rabies vaccination for dogs and cats three months of age and older is mandatory in Erie County. This includes “indoor” cats! The first vaccination is valid for one year and due every three years thereafter.

Free Rabies Vaccination clinics for dogs, cats and ferrets will be conducted by the Erie County Department of Health in association with the Niagara Frontier Veterinary Society and the SPCA serving Erie County on:

**May 22, 2013
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

**American Legion post #1041
533 Amherst St Buffalo, NY**

**May 29, 2013
7:00 p.m.**

**Erie Community College South Campus 4:00 - 7 p.m. 4:00 –
Orchard Park, NY**

For additional information on Rabies go to: Erie County Department of Health
<http://www.erie.gov/health/>