



BCHD PRESS RELEASE

Baltimore City Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Cat Found to Have Rabies in Baltimore City Pet owners encouraged to get dogs and cats vaccinated for rabies

BALTIMORE, MD (July 13, 2011) – The Baltimore City Health Department has confirmed a positive case of rabies in a domestic, short hair feline. The female cat was found July 7th on the side of the road in the 400 block of Kingston Road, just east of the Baltimore City/County line. The cat, a stray, was injured and immediately euthanized upon being taken to a veterinarian by a resident.

The Health Department, at this time, is only aware of one human exposure – the individual who attempted to rescue the cat. The individual is receiving medical attention. The last positive rabies case of a cat or dog in Baltimore City was in August 2008. Prior to that case, the last positive rabies case of a cat or dog was in 1986.

Rabies is a virus that is transmitted to humans through the saliva of an infected animal. In humans, rabies is preventable when medical care is obtained shortly after exposure. However, once clinical symptoms develop, rabies is nearly always fatal. There has not been a case of human rabies in Maryland since 1976.

Residents are urged not to touch or pet stray animals or unfamiliar animals. Symptoms of rabies in animals can include overly aggressive behavior, biting, sporadic eye movement (darting quickly back and forth), drooling from mouth, or slow lethargic behavior. If you are bitten, scratched or have contact with an animal you believe to be rabid, immediately wash the wound, seek medical attention, and report the incident to the Health Department's Animal Control Program by calling the City's 311 customer service telephone line.

In addition, residents are advised to keep their pet's rabies vaccinations up-to-date. Those who have not had their dogs, cats or domesticated ferrets vaccinated are encouraged to make an appointment with a veterinarian or visit the monthly rabies clinic held at the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS), which is normally held the first Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to noon, with some exceptions. Please call ahead to verify at 410-396-4695.

“Rabies is a life threatening disease which can be easily prevented with a simple vaccination,” said Commissioner of Health Dr. Oxiris Barbot. “By regularly vaccinating your pets, you are helping protect not just yourself and your family, but your neighbors and the larger community.”

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