

For Immediate Release

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Fourth Rabies Case Confirmed in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed the fourth positive rabies case in southwest Nebraska. “We are working closely with the Nebraska Department of Health and Humans Services and Center for Disease Control in tracking this rabies case in Hitchcock County,” states Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Coordinator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. Previous cases were located in Furnas and Chase County, all involving skunks.

“We recommend that residents contact their local veterinarian to make sure your pet’s vaccinations are current,” explains Propp. “This is the best protection for keeping your pets safe.”

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies. Nebraska’s last known rabies death was in 1926.

“Avoid any direct contact between a dead wild animal that may have infected your pets,” shares Propp. “Wear gloves, be sure to wash your hands in soap and water after taking off your gloves and use a bleach solution to disinfect any tools or surfaces that were potentially contaminated with saliva, nervous tissue or blood.”

Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. According to the Center for Disease Control, rabies is a medical urgency. Any wounds should be immediately washed and receive medical attention from a health care professional.

Animals with rabies may act differently from healthy animals. Wild animals may move slowly or may act as if they are tame. A pet that is usually friendly may snap at you or may try to bite. Some signs of rabies in animals are:

- changes in an animal’s behavior
- general sickness
- problems swallowing
- increased drooling
- aggression

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. For more information call Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223 or email nurse@swhealth.ne.gov. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street, McCook – one block north of Arby’s and 501 Broadway, Imperial – entrance on 5th Street. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook.com/swnphd and Twitter@swpublichealth.

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