

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Second Rabies Case in Southwest Nebraska for 2019**

A second positive rabies case has been confirmed in the Southwest Nebraska Public Health district (SWNPHD). This rabies report was also a skunk in Perkins County. "This is the second positive rabies animal that we have had in less than two weeks and in the same county. With the weather finally warming, animals are becoming more active," explains Melissa Propp, Public Health Nurse.

Animals with rabies may act differently from healthy animals. Nocturnal or nighttime animals may be out in the day. 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.

If you are around an animal which displays any of the below signs of rabies, move yourself and others to safety.

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

If you discover a dead wild animal that may have infected your pets:

- Remove the animal from the area by using a shovel, wearing gloves and placing carcass in a plastic bag
- Wash your hands in soap and water after taking off your gloves
- Avoid direct contact between the carcass and the person
- Disinfect tools, cages, gloves and other surfaces potentially contaminated with saliva, nervous tissue or blood with a 10 percent solution of household bleach in water

According to CDC "The rabies virus is transmitted through saliva or brain/nervous system tissue. You can only get rabies by coming in contact with these specific bodily excretions and tissues."

- It's important to remember that rabies is a medical urgency but not an emergency. Decisions should not be delayed.
- Wash any wounds immediately. One of the most effective ways to decrease the chance for infection is to wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
- See your doctor for attention for any trauma due to an animal attack before considering the need for rabies vaccination.

"Vaccination is the best protection for keeping your pets safe," states Propp. "We recommend that residents contact their local veterinarian to make sure your pet's vaccinations are current. In addition, please be careful around stray or strange animals. Teach children the importance of staying away from wild or unfamiliar animals."

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. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street, McCook (one block north of Arby's) and 501 Broadway (south entrance) in Imperial. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Twitter