



**April 25, 2018**

### **Protect Yourself and Your Pets from Rabies – Keep Vaccinations and Licenses Up to Date!**

Many people may not be aware of the fact that in the early 1900s, over 100 people in the United States died every year due to rabies! Now, largely because of the routine vaccination of pets against rabies, deaths due to rabies are extremely rare.

Rabies is a preventable disease of mammals that is spread through the bite or scratch of a rabid animal. Rabies is a fatal disease for both people and animals once symptoms start. For that reason, an estimated 40,000 people in the United States receive rabies post-exposure treatment each year. Many of these cases happen because someone is bitten either by a wild mammal, such as a bat, or by a potentially unvaccinated dog or cat.

Many rabies post-exposure treatments can be avoided if it can be confirmed that the dog or cat was up to date on its rabies vaccination. Michigan law requires that all dogs must have a current rabies vaccination. In addition, it is recommended that all cats and ferrets be vaccinated against rabies.

Follow these steps to protect your family and pets from rabies:

- Visit your veterinarian with your pet on a regular basis and keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all cats, ferrets, and dogs.
- Maintain control of your pets by keeping cats and ferrets indoors and keeping dogs under direct supervision. This prevents pets from contacting wild animals and potentially unvaccinated outdoor pets.
- Seek medical attention for any bite or scratch from an animal. If a pet is bitten or scratched, call your veterinarian for instructions.
- If you have been bitten by an animal or have come into contact with a bat, call the Barry-Eaton District Health Department at (517) 541-2641 in Charlotte or (269) 798-4152 in Hastings to receive instructions on what steps to take next.

Along with the statewide rabies vaccination law for dogs, all dogs must have a current Michigan dog license. Some cities also have laws on licensing dogs and cats; check with the city government for these requirements.

- Barry County Animal Control provides one or three year dog licenses, based on the rabies vaccination. Visit <http://bcshelter.tripod.com/dog-licensing-2.html> or call (269) 948-4885 for more information.
- Eaton County Animal Control dog licenses must be renewed each year. More information is available at <https://www.eatoncounty.org/departments/animal-control> or by calling (517) 543-5755.

For more information on rabies, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Rabies website at [www.cdc.gov/rabies/](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/) or the Barry-Eaton District Health Department's website at [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org).