

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DATE: July 10, 2015	Contact: Ryan Tekac
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Second Raccoon Identified As Positive for Rabies in Mahoning County

An Ohio Department of Health Laboratory report has confirmed that a raccoon located in Lowellville has tested positive for the rabies virus variant common to raccoons in the Eastern United States. The raccoon was tested due to a reported exposure between the raccoon and a domestic canine. The pre-contact vaccination status of the canine was undetermined therefore the animal has now received the rabies vaccine and is being quarantined for 180 days for precautionary measures.

The Mahoning County District Board of Health is reminding residents to protect themselves from the ever-present threat of rabies by following these precautions:

- **Vaccinate your pets.**
- **Maintain control of your pets to reduce their exposure to wildlife.**
- **Spay or neuter to decrease the number of stray animals.**
- **Avoid contact with wildlife and stray animals.**
- **Wash any animal bite areas thoroughly and follow up with a physician.**
- **Report any bite incidents to your local health department.**

“Pet owners need to remember that in Mahoning County all domestic dogs, cats and ferrets must be vaccinated against rabies. Rabies vaccinations can be obtained from a local veterinarian, Angels for Animals and the Animal Charity Humane Society. In addition, residents should be vigilant and not interact with or feed wildlife,” says Ryan Tekac, Director of Environmental Health for the Mahoning County District Board of Health. “Pets should be fed indoors and trash can lids secured to avoid attracting wildlife onto your property.”

Rabies is a fatal viral disease and a serious public health threat. All mammals, such as raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats, are believed to be susceptible to the disease. Rabies is most often transmitted through bites and scratches from unvaccinated pets, strays, and wildlife.

Whenever a domestic animal comes into contact with a potentially rabid animal, the health department will want to investigate. If the potentially rabid animal is dead or can be euthanized



by local authorities without damaging the skull, then the local board of health can retrieve the animal and submit it for testing.

If you find a sick or dead raccoon, skunk, or fox that is not decayed and does not have significant damage to the head, please contact your local health department:

- If found in the city of Youngstown, please contact the Youngstown City Health District at (330) 743-3333
- If found in all other Mahoning County communities, please contact the Mahoning County District Board of Health at (330) 270-2855 menu selection #2.

More information on rabies can be found on our website at

<http://www.mahoninghealth.org/health/protect-your-family-from-rabies-cdc-features/>.

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