



HEALTH DEPARTMENT Public Health Unit

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH- Linda Beers, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH PROMOTION &
PLANNING- Jessica Darney Buehler, MPH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information:

Lindsay Java, Communications Specialist, Essex County Health Department
518-873-3517 | lindsay.java@essexcountyny.gov

Essex County Health Department gives an extra rabies clinic and thanks volunteers for support.

In keeping with the month of November being considered a time to be thankful and for giving, the Essex County Health Department announces a free “fur-well” rabies vaccine clinic.

“As a local health department, we are required to offer at least three rabies vaccine clinics in a calendar year as part of our rabies prevention and control program,” stated Jessica Darney Buehler, Director of Health Planning and Promotion. “We started 2023 with six confirmed clinics. After the last clinic in October, we had 70 doses of vaccine left and we were motivated to get that vaccine out to our local pets. As we work with local veterinarians on the submission of specimens for rabies testing, we brainstormed what else we could do to increase pet vaccinations and rabies prevention awareness,” stated Buehler.

These discussions resulted in a clinic of multi-agency giving and an opportunity for community members to give if they choose. This “fur-well” rabies clinic is Thursday, November 2, 2023, from 6-8 PM at the NYS Department of Transportation in Elizabethtown.

Essex County Health Department is giving its remaining 70 doses of rabies vaccines and coordinating the clinic logistics including all those working the clinic as volunteers from the Health Department and Essex County Office of Emergency Services and Adirondack Veterinary Hospital.

The Adirondack Veterinarian Hospital is giving their services voluntarily to vaccinate pets and providing educational materials.

The NYS Department of Transportation in Elizabethtown is graciously giving the use of their location for the drive-through event.

“Clinic participants that want to join in the spirit of giving can give canned dog or cat food or laundry detergent to the North Country SPCA, where it will make a difference in the lives of our furry friends in need,” noted Buehler.

“The month of November is a time of reflection and gratitude. I am appreciative to the volunteers for their invaluable contribution to offer the residents we serve another opportunity to have their dogs, cats, and ferrets vaccinated at no cost, giving them protection should they encounter a rabid animal,” expressed Linda Beers, Director of Public Health for ECHD. “We want to ensure that pet owners in Essex County can access our rabies clinics without financial barriers to keep their pets safe,” said Beers.

There are approximately 16,200 households in Essex County, each of those houses has an average of 3.4 pets – that’s an estimated 55,080 dogs and cats!



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To date in 2023, the Essex County Health Department has investigated the following numbers of exposures, submissions, positive rabies cases, and post rabies exposure treatment.

Domestic Animal Bite Reports – 113

10-Day Confinements Issued – 101

Domestic Animals (bite reported) with a Current Rabies Vaccine – 67

Domestic Animals Submitted for Rabies Testing – 7

Wild Animals Submitted for Rabies Testing – 67

Confirmed Rabid Animals – 11 - 6 Gray Fox, 2 Raccoons, 2 Woodchucks, 1 Small Brown Bat

Individuals Treated with Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis – 56

Rabies is a serious public health concern. The Department follows NYSDOH guidance in ruling out rabies through 10- confinements and observations or testing. In instances where a person has a known or potential exposure to rabies, and when rabies cannot be ruled out, the Department facilitates rabies post-exposure treatment.

Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear, but it is also preventable. The Essex County Health Department supports mitigation and control efforts by:

- conducting rabies vaccine clinics each year to ensure pets are fully immunized;
- submitting animals for testing when rabies exposures cannot be ruled out;
- offering rabies post-exposure prophylaxis to individuals exposed to animals confirmed or suspected to be infected with rabies; and
- providing outreach and education to communities about rabies prevention and management strategies.

With only 70 doses of the rabies vaccine available for this clinic, register early! To register a dog, cat, or ferret for a rabies vaccine clinic, go to <https://www.co.essex.ny.us/Health/communicable-disease-control/rabies> .

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