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For Immediate Release

Contact: Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223

Fourth Positive Rabies Case

A fourth positive case of rabies in an animal has been reported to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). This positive rabies test was from a raccoon in Chase County. This is the third animal to test positive in Chase County so residents should continue to be on alert.

“This is the fourth confirmed case of rabies in an animal here in southwest Nebraska this year,” explains Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager with SWNPHD. “We would like to remind everyone about the importance of vaccinating pets and avoiding contact with wild or unfamiliar animals. It is important to give these types of animals space to help keep you and your pets safe.”

What to watch for

Be on alert for animals that show a sudden change in behavior, like acting aggressive, snarling or snapping, or nervousness. Stay away from animals that are normally active at night but are seen during the day, or that have lost their fear of humans.

Watch for odd behavior changes in pets that have been around wild animals, like if they suddenly have difficulty eating or drinking, or start drooling excessively.

What to do if bitten

If an animal bites you, wash the wounds immediately with soap and water. Then seek medical attention from a healthcare professional right away. Rabies affects the nervous system and should be treated quickly after exposure.

If it is safe to do so, catch the animal and contact your local veterinarian to get it tested for rabies. It may save you the cost of preventive treatment. When handling the dead animal, follow safety precautions:

- Avoid direct contact - do not touch the animal's body, saliva, or any fluids that may be contaminated.
- Wear protective gear - gloves and eye protection.
- Keep your distance as much as possible.
- Use long-handled tools like a shovel to move the animal to a bag or other container that can be shut.
- Wash tools with soap and hot water or one part bleach to nine parts water.
- Wash your hands very well with soap and water when done.

The last time there were 4 cases of rabies in a year in southwest Nebraska was in 2017. The best method to prevent rabies is to make sure that pets, livestock, and horses are protected against rabies with current vaccinations. Talk to your veterinarian if you are unsure if your pets are up to date.

For more information contact Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow SWNPHD on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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