

News Releases

DHEC News Release: Puppy exposes four Laurens County people to rabies

For Immediate Release

September 27, 2013

Puppy exposes four Laurens County people to rabies

COLUMBIA, S.C - Two adults and two children in the Ware Shoals area of Laurens County are undergoing post-exposure treatments after being potentially exposed to rabies by a puppy that tested positive for the disease, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control reported today.

"To reduce the risk of getting rabies, we recommend that people avoid wild animals acting tame and tame animals acting wild," said Sue Ferguson of DHEC's Bureau of Environmental Health Services. "About 275 South Carolinians must undergo preventive treatment for rabies every year, with most exposures coming from bites or scratches by a rabid or suspected rabid animal. Wild animals carry the disease most often, but domestic pets can contract rabies as well."

Ferguson said state law requires pet owners to have their pets regularly vaccinated against the disease. Pets can receive vaccinations as early as 12-weeks-old. "World Rabies Day is Sept. 28, so now is a good time to remind South Carolinians to vaccinate their pets," she said. "This unvaccinated puppy was bitten on the nose by a suspect rabid skunk and died from rabies ten days later."

"If you think you have been exposed to the rabies virus through a bite, scratch or the saliva of a possibly infected animal, immediately wash the affected area with plenty of soap and water," Ferguson said. "Then be sure to get medical attention. It is always very important to report the incident to DHEC."

There were 137 confirmed cases of animal rabies during 2012 in South Carolina. There have been 92 confirmed cases in animals statewide this year. This animal is the first domestic pet and the sixth animal to test positive this year from Laurens County.

World Rabies Day aims to promote rabies prevention and control through awareness of the serious impact of human and animal rabies, how easy it is to prevent, and how to eliminate the main global sources of the disease. Rabies in humans is 100% preventable through prompt and appropriate medical care. For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/worldrabiesday/> <<http://www.cdc.gov/worldrabiesday/>>.

For more information about rabies, see DHEC's webpage at

/Health/DiseasesandConditions/InfectiousDiseases/InsectAnimalBorne/Rabies/

<<http://www.scdhec.gov/health/diseasesandconditions/infectiousdiseases/insectanimalborne/rabies/>>, or contact your local DHEC BEHS office. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's rabies webpage can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies> <<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>>.

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S.C. Department of Health and
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