



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 31, 2010

FREE RABIES VACCINATIONS FOR DOGS, CATS AND FERRETS One-day vaccination clinic sponsored by the Westchester County Health Department

The Westchester County Department of Health, in conjunction with the New Rochelle Humane Society, is sponsoring a free rabies vaccination clinic for the cats, dogs and ferrets of Westchester residents on **Sunday, April 25.**

The clinic will run from **12 p.m. to 4 p.m.** at the **New Rochelle Humane Society, located at 70 Portman Road in New Rochelle.** Appointments are necessary. To make an appointment, or for more information, please call the Humane Society directly at (914) 632-2925. Cats and ferrets must be brought to the clinic in carriers and dogs must be on leashes. Aggressive dogs must be muzzled.

“Rabies is a fatal disease that is spread through the bite or saliva of infected animals” said Westchester County Acting Health Commissioner, Dr. Cheryl Archbald. “Vaccinating your pet against rabies will protect your pet and your family in case your pet has contact with a rabid or potentially rabid animal.” Animals most commonly infected by rabies are raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes. However, domestic animals such as cats and dogs are also at risk because they can easily contract rabies from wild or stray animals.

Under New York State law, dogs, cats and ferrets are required to receive their first rabies vaccination no later than four months after birth. A second rabies shot must be given within one year of the first vaccination with additional booster shots given every one or three years after that, depending on the vaccine used. Owners who fail to have their pets completely vaccinated for rabies may be fined up to \$1,000. A pet that is up-to-date with its rabies vaccinations would only need to get a booster dose of vaccine within five days of the pet’s exposure to a known or suspect rabid animal. Animals not up-to-date with rabies vaccinations would need to be quarantined or potentially euthanized following contact with a rabid or suspect-rabid animal.

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A change in an animal's behavior is often the first sign of rabies. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. Staggering and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted in infected animals. Individuals should avoid touching unfamiliar, stray or wild animals. Children should immediately tell an adult if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal.

All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Health Department at (914) 813-5000. Outside of business hours, callers should follow instructions in the recorded message for reporting public health emergencies 24 hours a day.

To learn more about rabies and its prevention, residents can also call the Rabies Hotline at (914) 813-5010 to hear a taped message or visit the Health Department website at www.westchestergov.com/health.