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BAT TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES PALM BEACH GARDENS

Contact:

Public Information

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PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL- Florida Department of Health Laboratory confirmed today that a bat that was picked up yesterday at a Palm Beach Gardens residence has tested positive for rabies.

The bat was captured in a screened in patio and Animal Care & Control was notified and sent it to the lab for testing. There was human exposure when the captor attempted to pick up the bat with a towel. The victim will now be placed on the series of rabies shots.

According to the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County this is the first confirmed rabid animal this year in the county. Residents in the area of PGA National should take necessary precautions to avoid contact with any wild animals.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease.

The following advice is issued:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Animal Care & Control at 561-233-1200.
- Call your local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.

For further information on rabies, go to the Florida Department of Health website:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html>

or contact the Florida Health Palm Beach County, 561-840-4500. Animals exhibiting signs of sickness and aggressive behavior should be reported to Animal Control at 561-233-1200.

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