

**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

Date: September 25, 2012

Released By: Jose Arballo, Jr.
Public Information Specialist

John Welsh
Public Information Officer
(951) 358-7045 Office

Contact: Barbara Cole, RN, PHN, MSN
Director, Disease Control
(951) 358-5107 Office
(951) 358-5446 Fax

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WORLD RABIES DAY

With World Rabies Day planned for Sept. 28, the County of Riverside Departments of Animal Services and Public Health are promoting rabies prevention and education awareness. Free animal rabies vaccinations are being offered by Animal Services on Sept. 28 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 6851 Van Buren Blvd. in Jurupa Valley. Educational materials on rabies are also being distributed.

Rabies is 100 percent preventable, but it is estimated that 55,000 people worldwide die from the illness each year, about one person every ten minutes. The World Rabies Day initiative is a global rabies awareness campaign being spearheaded by the UK Charity Alliance for Rabies Control and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"This campaign offers all of us a unique opportunity to increase global awareness of the most deadly disease known to humans," says Dr. Deborah Briggs, Executive Director for the Alliance of Rabies Control. "A major part of this effort is the declaration of an annual World Rabies Day on September 28th. Events are planned throughout the world to increase awareness about rabies, and to raise support and funding towards its prevention and control."

Rabies continues to be a threat. There have been 10 human cases with 9 deaths in California since 1995. Bats and skunks are the most common animals found to be rabid in California. In Riverside County the disease is frequently detected in bats. Although there have been no human cases of rabies documented in Riverside County to date, there have been 12 individuals exposed to rabid bats since 2010, requiring post exposure prophylaxis. Of interest in 2011, there was a family of 4 which required post exposure prophylaxis after a bat, which later tested positive for rabies, landed on the head of one of the youngest family members while they were out taking a walk.

Please join the County of Riverside along with our national and international partners in working together to stamp out rabies. It is important for the public to take measures to prevent human exposure to potentially rabid animals. This includes:

- Avoid contact with wild animals.
- Never touch or pick up a bat or other wild animal.
- Contact Animal Control if the animal is invading your yard or house.
- Seal holes in screens and doors, to prevent bats and other animals from entering your home.
- Don't leave exposed garbage or pet food outside your home.
- Vaccinate your pets with the rabies vaccination. Keep these vaccinations current.

Additional information is available online at www.rivcoph.org and at www.worldrabiesday.org, or by calling Disease Control at (951) 358-5107 or e-mailing Animal Services at shelterinfo@rivcocha.org.