

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 19, 2019

Dear Police Chief:

Over the past 18 years there has been a significant reduction in human and pet exposures to rabies throughout Allegheny County. This is largely due to the efforts of the rabies vaccination program for wild raccoons spearheaded by the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (USDA), who the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) partners with for this massive effort. This year, employees and volunteers of ACHD and the USDA will be distributing vaccine-containing baits from **August 5th through August 21st** across Allegheny County. Baits will be delivered in every municipality of the County. Your municipality will be baited by hand and from vehicles during August 5th through August 12th. The enclosed flyer contains images of the two types of bait: One is a plastic sachet (looks like a ketchup packet) coated in fish meal, the other is a plastic sachet enclosed in a fish meal block. The fish scent attracts the raccoons who consume the bait and vaccine, resulting in the development of antibodies to the rabies virus.

The risk of adverse effects to humans and animals due to exposure to the vaccine is minimal, but we urge the public to avoid contact with the bait if possible. If a stray bait must be moved, it should be picked up using rubber or latex gloves or a shovel. We are also asking the public to **keep their dogs on a leash, indoors, or confined to their property as much as possible during baiting and the week after.**

In years past, we have specifically had problems with off-leash dogs consuming the baits in parks. Parks are common raccoon habitats and therefore important areas to bait. This interferes with their intended purpose and concerns and upsets citizens. Feel free to post the enclosed sign in community parks.

Thanks in advance for your help publicizing the baiting effort in municipal newsletters, publications, and on social media with the enclosed educational materials. We request that you also inform your Emergency Management Coordinator of this endeavor. If you need further information, please call Lori Horowitz, ACHD Rabies Baiting Project Manager, at 412-350-3654. Contact Ms. Horowitz if your municipality is planning an activity such as a Community Day during the baiting periods so that we may avoid placing the baits within the celebration area. Lori can also provide electronic copies of our educational materials and can be reached via email at lori.horowitz@alleghenycounty.us.

We appreciate your continuing cooperation. Through this effort, we hope to reduce the likelihood of a human case of rabies in Allegheny County and surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

Lori Horowitz
ACHD Rabies Baiting Project Manager

Enclosures

CC: Dave Namey, Program Manager, Housing and Community Environment Program
Kwesi Willacy, Program Manager, Infectious Disease
Ryan Scarpino, Public Information Officer



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