



## **St. Lawrence County Public Health Department**

Jolene Munger, MPH, MA ■ Interim Public Health Director  
80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 ■ Canton, New York 13617-1476  
Phone: (315) 386-2325 ■ Fax: (315) 386-2203

### **Press Release**

Date: May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: 315-386-2325

### **St. Lawrence County Public Health Rabies Program**

**Canton, NY**— Did you know the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department is responsible for preventing the spread of rabies? We partner with local townships to host free rabies clinics, as well as host clinics of our own, to help keep pets up-to-date on their rabies vaccine. Although many 2020 rabies clinics were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 1,065 animals were vaccinated at the clinics that were able to be held. Typically, over 3,000 animals are vaccinated during the year through use of the free clinics. We hope to see these numbers again in 2021, as there are 15 free drive-thru style clinics being offered between May and October.

In addition to hosting free rabies clinics, we are responsible for monitoring all domestic animal bites to determine if there is a risk to humans for rabies. We monitor animals for 10 days to make sure they remain healthy. If the animal is healthy after the 10 day confinement, we know there was no risk of rabies to the person who was bitten. This process is done in collaboration with Animal and Dog Control, Law Enforcement, and Veterinarians.

In 2020, there were 285 total bite reports. 92 of these bites were from unvaccinated animals. Bite reports can be made by calling the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department at 315-386-2325, or by faxing us the [Bite Report Form](#) that can be found on our website.

If a person is bitten by a wild animal, we follow NYSDOH guidelines to evaluate and authorize rabies post exposure treatment. We determine if the animal needs to be submitted for testing, and coordinate this process with the veterinarian and Wadsworth State Laboratory. Once an exposure is determined, post-exposure treatment is provided for the individual who was exposed. Rabies is a fatal disease. Once someone has developed the disease, the treatment is not always effective. Therefore, we provide treatment as soon as possible, at no cost to the individual who was exposed.

Rabies is a preventable disease, but if pets are left unvaccinated, it can be fatal. Rabies spreads to humans or pets when they are scratched or bitten by a rabid animal. If a person is scratched or bitten by a wild animal, they should call our department to determine if medical treatment is needed for rabies.

On Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, we are hosting a free rabies clinic from 10am – 12pm at the Canton Human Services Building. **Registration is required. No Walk-Ins.** Registration can be done by visiting: <https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/PublicHealth>.

Be sure to check out our Facebook page @SLCPublicHealth or our website for the 2021 Rabies Clinic Schedule. For further questions or information on the Rabies Control Program, please contact the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department at 315-386-2325.

###