



McHenry County Department of Health

2200 N. Seminary Avenue, Woodstock IL 60098

Phone 815-334-4510 Fax 815-334-4635

www.mcdh.info

www.twitter.com/mchenrycohealth

www.facebook.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 26, 2010

Contact: Debra Quackenbush
815-334-4456; cell 815-236-3238

County leads State in rabid bats – 17

Woodstock IL – Two residents from Woodstock have begun receiving treatment for rabies exposure after they awoke to find a bat in their bedroom; it later tested positive for rabies. This is the 17th rabid bat reported this year, according to the McHenry County Department of Health, matching the total recorded in all of 2009. Bats are unusually active this time of year as they're in the middle of their breeding season. The most recent data from the State Health Department's website (8-13-10) shows 68 rabid bats reported state-wide. The County saw the highest number of rabid bats in 2008 with 23. Last year, rabid bats were reported locally as late as November.

You can't tell if a bat has rabies just by looking at it. However, a bat that is active by day, found in a place where bats are not usually seen (such as in your home, in a swimming pool or on the lawn) or is unable to fly is likely rabid. If you find a bat, don't release it; keep it contained in a room, under a bucket or blanket and call McHenry County Animal Control (815-459-6222). Bats must be in good condition in order to test it for rabies – either alive or recently deceased. Specimens that are in good condition and test negative for rabies eliminates the need for rabies treatment.

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals; it can only be confirmed in a laboratory. The best way to avoid rabies is to avoid exposure. Pet owners are reminded to keep their animals' rabies vaccinations up-to-date. Teach children to never approach or handle wild animals to reduce their risk of exposure.

To learn more about rabies prevention, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>. Questions about exposure should be directed to MCDH's Communicable Disease Program at 815-334-4500.

###

"Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966."