



**McHenry County
Department of Health**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County reports 1st rabid bat of 2010

WOODSTOCK IL – McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) confirms its first rabid bat of the year, found on April 15th in a yard in Spring Grove. No exposure was reported. When a bat is found in a home, it is strongly recommended that it not be released but contained in a room, under a bucket or blanket (using gloves as a barrier). In order to test bats for rabies, it is important they be in good condition – either alive or recently deceased. Specimens in good condition and test negative for rabies eliminates the need for rabies treatment following human exposure. McHenry County Animal Control should be contacted immediately at 815-459-6222.

McHenry County led the State in 2009 with rabid bats (17); bats reported statewide totaled 83. In 2008, Illinois recorded its 2nd highest number of rabid bats (103), with McHenry County reporting 23. This year, the Counties of Will, Kane and Jackson have already reported rabid bats. In wild animal, rabies is more common in bats, skunks, raccoons and foxes, but the disease also has been found in deer and in large rodents, such as woodchucks. Cats, dogs and livestock can also get rabies if they are not vaccinated. A rabies fact sheet is available at the Illinois Dept of Public Health www.idph.state.il.us/public/hb/hbrabies.htm.

The best way to avoid rabies is to avoid exposure. Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system and can only be confirmed in a laboratory. Residents are encouraged to take a “hands off” approach to wild animals to reduce their risk of exposure. Parents also need to educate their children of the dangers. 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 more likely than others to be rabid.

Questions about exposure should be directed to MCDH’s Communicable Disease Program at 815-334-4500.

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