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Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

## news release

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July 28, 2016

### Public Health reports first rabid dog in county since 2010

For the first time in more than five years, a dog in Humboldt County has tested positive for rabies. The infection is believed to have resulted from a fight with a rabid skunk, although staff from the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) have been unable to confirm this.

The animal is known to have travelled to several locations throughout the county. Public Health officials are working to assess the possibility of exposure to other domestic animals and humans.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, domestic animals account for only 7.3 percent of all rabies cases. In 2014, the most recent year for which statistics are available, 59 dogs and 272 cats tested positive for rabies nationwide.

In California, an average of only 1.1 domestic animal rabies cases were reported annually over the past 10 years. The California Department of Public Health reports that that number rose to three cases in 2014, involving a dog and two cats.

In Humboldt County, only 22 cases of rabies in domestic animals have been reported since 1959, when recordkeeping began. The most recent, a dog, was reported in 2010.

Rabies is always present in the wildlife population throughout Humboldt County, experts say, especially among skunks, bats and foxes. Public Health officials stress the importance of fully vaccinating domestic animals against rabies, including dogs, cats and select livestock.

Other preventive measures include avoiding contact with wild and stray animals, including feral cats. Do not feed wildlife or leave pet food outdoors at night. Report animal bites to your county or municipal animal control officer, and if you are bitten, wash the bite immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention.

For questions about rabies or to report a rabid animal, please call the DHHS Division of Environmental Health at 707-445-6215 or toll free at 1-800-963-9241.

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