

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Pitbull Euthanized After Probable Rabies Exposure

A pitbull terrier in Rome that had not received a rabies vaccination was euthanized after exhibiting symptoms characteristic of the disease, Oneida County Health Department officials reported today.

It had been reported on September 13th that the dog had killed a skunk. Because the dog had virtually consumed his kill, there wasn't enough of the suspect skunk left for testing. Subsequently, the dog's owner was ordered to quarantine the animal in an outdoor caged area for six months to determine whether or not he had contracted rabies.

Late last week the dog began drooling excessively, refused food and water and began walking in circles within the confines of his cage. On Saturday the animal was taken to the Rome Humane Society and euthanized.

"This is another unfortunate example of the tragic cost of failing to vaccinate a family pet resulting in its necessary destruction," Bobbi Jo Girven, Rabies Prevention and Treatment Program Coordinator for the Oneida County Health Department said. *"Fortunately, the dog had been quarantined and there were no human exposures requiring treatment."*

In addition to this suspect case, Oneida County has had 10 animals test positive for rabies since the start of the year. They include three raccoons, three skunks, two bats, one gray fox and a cat.

New York State law requires all pet owners to have their dogs, cats and pet ferrets at least 3-months of age vaccinated against rabies. The Oneida County Health Department holds a series of rabies vaccination clinics at various sites throughout summer at various locations. The last in the 2010 series of clinics will be held on **Tuesday, October 26th from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Oneida County DPW Garage in Oriskany.** Pets must be leashed or in a pet carrier. A \$10.00 donation is requested to help defray costs.

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