

# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Adirondack Bank Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 185 Genesee St., Utica, NY 13501

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.  
ONEIDA COUNTY EXECUTIVE



PHYLLIS D. ELLIS, BSN, MS, F.A.C.H.E.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

## ADMINISTRATION

Phone: (315) 798-6400 ☎ Fax: (315) 266-6138

Date 2/21/19

For Immediate Release

Contact: Regina Bulman 315 266-7049

### Skunk Tests Positive for Rabies in Vernon *Pet Owners Reminded to Vaccinate Pets*

A skunk has tested positive for rabies in the Town of Vernon, however, there was no human contact, and a dog that came in contact with the infected animal is under quarantine and being observed.

According to Oneida County Health Department officials, on 2/17/19 a family noticed a skunk chasing their dog in their barn in the Town of Vernon. The skunk was put down, the owner called his veterinarian, and the skunk was sent to the New York State Department of Health Wadsworth Center for testing where positive results were reported today. There was no human interaction with the skunk, however, the dog was overdue on its rabies vaccine which requires a six month quarantine.

“Thankfully, everything was handled properly. The appropriate health personnel was contacted immediately and there was no human contact with the animal,” said Oneida County Director of Health, Phyllis D. Ellis, BSN, MS, F.A.C.H.E. “Unfortunately, this dog happened to be overdue on his rabies shots. Had he been up-to-date, he would not need to be quarantined.”

Ellis said it is vital to the safety of our pets and families that rabies vaccinations be kept current. The Health Department offers rabies vaccination clinics throughout the year at various community locations. The next clinic is scheduled on March 22 at the Trenton Municipal Center from 6-7:30 pm.

For the safety of all, health department officials recommend the following:

- **Keep your pets’ rabies vaccinations up-to-date.** Dogs, cats and ferrets 3-months and older must be vaccinated, even if they are kept indoors. Dogs and cats must be vaccinated at 3 months old, 1 year, and then once every 3 years. Ferrets must be vaccinated every year.
- **Do not** touch or feed wild or unknown animals
- **Do not** touch dead or sick animals and warn children to avoid wild or strange animals
- Whenever possible, **do not** leave pets outdoors unattended
- Walk your pet on a leash, and keep your pets indoors at night
- Reduce your chances of contact by ‘animal proofing’ your property
- Learn the signs of rabies in animals
- Seek immediate medical attention if you have contact with an animal you think may be rabid
- Report all animal bites to the Health Department

For more information on Rabies Prevention or a complete schedule of rabies clinics, contact the Oneida County Health Department at 315 798-5064 or log onto our web site at [ocgov.net/oneida/health](http://ocgov.net/oneida/health).