

NEWS FROM Legislator

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For Immediate Release

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Free Rabies Vaccination Clinic

(HUNTINGTON STATION, NY... June 8, 2015) –Suffolk Legislator Lou D'Amaro (D-Huntington Station) is pleased to inform all County residents that the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) and the Brookhaven Animal Shelter will be offering free rabies vaccinations for dogs, cats and ferrets. The vaccination clinic will be:

Saturday, June 20, 2015
10 am to 1 pm
Brookhaven Animal Shelter
300 Horseblock Rd, Brookhaven, NY

Although this service is available to all County residents, the quantity of vaccinations is limited and available only while supplies last. All dogs must be on leashes and all cats and ferrets must be in carriers.

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system. It is most often seen among wild animals such as raccoons, bats, skunks and foxes, but any mammal can be infected. Pets and livestock can get rabies if they are not vaccinated to protect them against infection.

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“According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the most prevalent global source of rabies in humans originates from dogs that have been bitten by infected wild animals,” said Legislator D’Amaro. “By vaccinating our pets, we can prevent the transmission of this fatal disease to humans.”

New York State and Suffolk County law requires that all dogs, cats and ferrets be vaccinated against rabies. Vaccinating pets not only provides protection for the animals but also acts as a barrier to keep the rabies virus from spreading between wild animals and people.

The SCDHS Bureau of Public Health Protection tests animals that have been reported as acting strangely or have come into contact with humans. Of the animals tested in 2014, only bats have tested positive for rabies. Of the 52 bats tested last year, 3 tested positive for rabies.

Rabies was identified in 19 raccoons near the Nassau-Suffolk border in the northwestern portion of the Town of Huntington between 2006 and 2009. The last confirmed case of a rabid raccoon was in January 2009.

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services recommends the following precautions to protect from possible exposure to rabies:

- Do not feed, touch, adopt or approach wild animals, stray dogs or cats.
- Be sure your pet dogs, cats and ferrets as well as horses and valuable livestock animals are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. Vaccination protects pets if they are exposed to rabid animals. Pets too young to be vaccinated should be kept indoors
- Keep family pets indoors at night. Do not leave them outside unattended or let them roam free.
- Do not attract wild animals to your home or yard. Keep your property free of stored bird seed or other foods that may attract wild animals. Feed pets indoors. Tightly cap or put away garbage cans. Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch or garage. Cap your chimney with screens.
- Do not transport or relocate any wild animals.
- Teach children not to touch any animal they do not know and to tell an adult immediately if they are bitten by any animal.

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- **Report all animal bites or contact with wild animals to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services at (631) 853-0333 weekdays, 9 am to 4:30 pm. If possible, do not let any animal that has possibly exposed someone to rabies escape.**

For more information on rabies, visit the New York State Department of Health website at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/rabies/rabies.htm> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/>.

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Suffolk County Legislator Lou D'Amaro represents the 17th Legislative District, which includes parts of Huntington, Huntington Station, South Huntington, Melville, West Hills, Cold Spring Hills, Dix Hills, Deer Park, North Babylon and West Babylon. He is chairman of the Budget & Finance committee and a member of the Education & Information Technology and Human Services committees of the Suffolk County Legislature.