



DAVIDSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Protecting, Caring, Serving Our County

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For release: Immediately

Domestic Cat Confirmed Positive for Rabies in Davidson County

The Davidson County Health Department was notified on November 6, 2023, of an unvaccinated, domestic cat that had been taken to the Davidson County Animal Shelter for observation due to displaying erratic behavior. The difficult but necessary decision was made to euthanize the animal and it be tested for the rabies virus. Health Department staff received notification on November 7, 2023, that the animal had been confirmed positive for rabies. Individuals who had confirmed contact with the animal and probable exposure to the virus have been sent for postexposure prophylaxis treatment. This incident occurred in the Thomasville area of Davidson County.

While wild animals are much more likely to transmit the rabies virus, we have the tools readily available to protect our pets from this deadly virus. We encourage all pet owners to be vigilant in getting animals vaccinated against rabies and kept current. North Carolina law requires that all domestic cats, dogs, and ferrets receive the rabies vaccine by 4 months of age. This incident also serves as a reminder to exercise caution if pets are left outside without supervision or appropriate boundaries keeping your pet in a controlled space and unfamiliar animals out.

With the most recent confirmed positive, Davidson County has now had seven identified rabies cases in 2023. North Carolina state law requires that all animal bites, domestic or wild, be promptly reported to the local health department. Incidents involving potential human exposure to the rabies virus will quickly turn tragic without proper medical treatment. The rabies virus is 99.9% fatal in humans who do not seek immediate postexposure treatment.

If you see wild or unfamiliar animals displaying unusual behavior, do not engage and contact Animal Control for assistance. If you suspect your domestic animal may have been in direct contact with a wild or unfamiliar animal, contact your veterinarian for guidance. All prevention methods are appropriate when safeguarding lives.

For more information about rabies prevention visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/prevention/index.html>

For media inquiries related to the press release contact: janna.walker@davidsoncountync.gov.

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