

**SUFFOLK COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**



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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Suffolk County Offers Free Rabies Vaccination Clinic**

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) and the Animal Rescue Fund of the Hamptons (ARF) will offer free rabies vaccinations\* for dogs, cats and ferrets as follows:

**Saturday, April 5, 2014**

**11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Riverhead Polish Hall**

**214 Marcy Avenue, Riverhead, NY**

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

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 act 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 2013, only bats have tested positive for rabies. Of the 84 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 or 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 and allowed outside only under direct observation.
- 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.

**Report all animal bites or contact with wild animals to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services at (631) 853-0333 weekdays, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. If possible, do not let any animal that has possibly exposed someone to rabies to 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>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/>.