



Bob Wise
Governor

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

ORAL RABIES VACCINATION PROGRAM MEMORANDUM



Paul L. Nusbaum
Secretary

To: West Virginia Active Rabies Surveillance Counties and Interested Parties
From: West Virginia Oral Rabies Vaccination Program
Date: June 19, 2001
Re: May 2001 Active Rabies Surveillance Project Update

Project Updates

GPS Units Mailed to Counties - GPS units were purchased by the Oral Rabies Vaccination Program and mailed to several counties on May 17. All counties in the state should now be equipped to provide latitude and longitude coordinates on rabies specimens submitted to the state lab for testing. In addition to the unit, most counties have also been trained to collect latitude and longitude manually from highway maps, in case it is not feasible to collect this data using the GPS unit.

Disposable Scalpels Mailed to Active Surveillance Counties - A safety issue regarding scalpels was discussed in last month's memorandum. Instead of using disposable blades on a reusable handle, disposable scalpels were mailed to active surveillance counties on May 22. Disposable scalpels should eliminate the possibility of cross-contamination and reduce the possibility of personal injury. Counties should contact our office as additional disposable scalpels are needed.

Second Positive Raccoon Identified in Raleigh County - Another raccoon surveillance specimen submitted from Raleigh County tested positive in May, for a total of two positive raccoons out of 10 raccoon specimens submitted. Raleigh County has also submitted three fox specimens, none of which tested positive.

Rabies Discussed at WVPHA Regional Conference - The West Virginia Public Health Association's Regional Conference was held at the Flatwoods Day's Inn on June 13. Approximately 120 people were in attendance. There was no mention of lions and tigers and bears, but animals did take center stage as presentations focused on West Nile virus, foot and mouth disease, and

rabies. The Oral Rabies Vaccination Program was given the opportunity to present an overview of rabies in West Virginia and provide an update on active surveillance project activities to date. Dr. Cathleen Hanlon, Veterinary Medical Officer at the CDC, provided a historical look at rabies in the United States and discussed the results of various rabies vaccination projects that have occurred in the U.S. in recent years. Following the meeting, Dr. Hanlon also demonstrated the technique to remove brainstem tissue from surveillance specimens. A total of 11 specimens were provided by Diana Sears and Patty Rodgers of the Nicholas County Health Department and John Forbes of the USDA at Elkins. Sam Harmon from the Mingo County Health Department, Diana Sears, and Dr. Hanlon removed brainstem tissue from all specimens before a small group of onlookers. We extend our thanks to Nicholas County and the USDA for providing specimens for this training exercise.

Improvements to be Made at State Rabies Lab

The West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services is in the process of making some improvements to the rabies lab, thanks to money recently received from the state legislature. Money has been made available for installing a new fume hood, purchasing an autopsy saw and blades, and purchasing a computer and printer. Miscellaneous supplies and postage are also being provided for. The lab will also be hiring a new rabies technician with this funding, and this technician will be receiving training from the CDC and other state laboratories. These improvements will aid in the additional testing that is required for the active surveillance project, as well as better equip the lab for handling day to day rabies laboratory activities.



May Data and Data Completeness

Active surveillance counties more than doubled the number of submissions from April to May. In April, there were 28 submissions with a completeness rate of 68%. May data reflects a total of 61 submissions and a completeness rate of 75%. From February to May, there have been a total of 124 submissions with an initial completeness rate of 69%. Counties have been submitting latitude and longitude coordinates on cases that were initially submitted without this information. The current completeness rate on these 124 submissions is 83%. A total of 16 out of the 20 counties in the active surveillance area have been able to submit specimens during the February to May period.

State Public Health Veterinarian to Arrive July 2

Jane Rooney, DVM, will be joining the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health on July 2 to serve as the state's public health veterinarian. Dr. Rooney has already been involved in many of the meetings and discussions regarding the rabies project and will therefore be familiar with the project when she arrives on July 2. Dr. Rooney has had experience with rabies vaccination programs in other capacities, and we are looking forward to her becoming a member of West Virginia's state and local team.

ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE COUNTIES: In talking with personnel from many active surveillance counties, we have learned of public awareness activities that may have contributed to the increase in submissions the past few months. Please remember to send in your Log of Public Awareness Activities so we will be able to highlight these activities in this memorandum. What is working in one county might be used by other county health departments to increase submissions in those areas.

May We Suggest. . .?

The Fourth of July is just around the corner, and many communities in the active surveillance area might hold an annual parade to celebrate this event. Local health departments might be able to take advantage of these festivities and distribute active surveillance materials to the public! A great number of submissions have been roadkill, and holiday traffic means more sets of eyes scouring the roadways for signs of acceptable surveillance specimens.



WEST VIRGINIA ACTIVE RABIES SURVEILLANCE - MAY 2001 Number of Satisfactory Specimens Submitted and Completeness of Data								
County	Raccoons Tested	Skunks Tested	Foxes Tested	Coyotes Tested	Total Tested	Total With Complete Data	Percent Completeness	Total Pos.*
BOONE	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
BRAXTON	5	0	0	0	5	5	100%	0
CALHOUN	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
CLAY	5	0	1	0	6	5	83%	0
DODDRIDGE	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
FAYETTE	1	0	0	0	1	1	100%	0
GILMER	5	0	0	0	5	0	0%	0
KANAWHA	2	0	1	0	3	2	67%	0
LOGAN	2	0	0	0	2	0	0%	0
MINGO	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
NICHOLAS	13	0	1	0	14	14	100%	0
PLEASANTS	4	0	0	0	4	0	0%	0
RALEIGH	3	0	0	0	3	3	100%	1
RITCHIE	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
ROANE	1	0	0	0	1	0	0%	0
TYLER	4	0	0	0	4	3	75%	0
WEBSTER	11	0	1	0	12	12	100%	0
WIRT	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
WOOD	1	0	0	0	1	1	100%	0
WYOMING	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
TOTAL	57	0	4	0	61	46	75%	1

*Raleigh County raccoon tested positive

