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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Princeton Recognizes “World Rabies Day”

Protect Yourself, Protect Your Pets with Rabies Vaccination

PRINCETON (September 22, 2014) - The Princeton Health Department (PHD) on September 28, 2013, will join partners in New Jersey and around the world to recognize the eighth annual World Rabies Day, a worldwide event to raise awareness about the impact of rabies in humans and animals.

“Princeton residents should protect themselves and their pets by having their pets vaccinated against rabies,” said Jeff Grosser, Princeton Health Officer.

Rabies in humans is 100 percent preventable through prompt appropriate medical care, yet more than 55,000 people die of the disease each year, mostly in areas of the world that still have the "dog-to-dog" type of rabies transmission. Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. When a person is bitten by a rabid animal, the disease is prevented with a four-dose rabies vaccine series administered over a period of 14 days and a dose of rabies immunoglobulin given at the beginning of the series.

One of the most effective ways to prevent rabies is to vaccinate pets. All New Jersey local health departments offer low-cost animal rabies vaccination clinics. Check out the Princeton website for information on upcoming rabies vaccination clinics, <http://www.princetonnj.gov/>.

Remember these steps to protect yourself and your pets from rabies:

- Vaccinate your dogs, cats, ferrets, and other animals against rabies.
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance.
- Do not let pets roam free.
- Cover garbage cans securely and do not leave pet food outside.
- Prevent bats from entering your home. If you do find a bat, do not touch it.
- Only let it go if you are absolutely sure no people or household pets have had any contact with it. If it is alive, you can catch it by placing a small box, bowl, or can over the bat once it has landed to roost, and then slide a piece of cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Tape the cardboard to the container and contact the Princeton Animal Control Officer (609)921-2100. If you are unable to catch the bat, contact the Princeton Animal Control Officer.

- If you or your pet has been exposed to a rabid or suspected rabid domestic animal, get the owner's name, address and telephone number.
- Contact the Princeton Health Department or Princeton Animal Control in the event of an exposure.

In August 2014, Princeton had a total of six positive rabies specimens confirmed by the New Jersey Department of Health Laboratory (5 bats, 1 raccoon). This was the highest monthly total of animals testing positive for rabies in Princeton in the last 20 years. Each year, approximately 300 animals are confirmed rabid in the State, and over 1,000 New Jersey residents receive rabies vaccination after being exposed to a rabid animal. To date in 2014, 7 animals have been confirmed rabid in Princeton. While wildlife species (most commonly raccoons, bats and foxes) account for the majority of confirmed rabid animals, cats are the most common rabid domestic animal reported in New Jersey.

To learn more about rabies in New Jersey, including rabies surveillance statistics and efforts to prevent and control the disease, visit <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/rabies/techinfo.shtml>. To learn more about World Rabies Day, visit <http://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day>.