

April 10, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Reporting of Suspect Rabies Exposure by Private Veterinarians and Veterinary Clinics

Manitoba Rabies Central, in an effort to improve communication around the reporting of suspect rabies exposures would like to update veterinarians and veterinary clinics by sharing the following information:

Reporting of Suspect Rabies Exposure with Potential Human Exposure

Manitoba Rabies Central continues to manage rabies exposures in Manitoba following the shifting of responsibilities from the CFIA to the provinces and territories back in 2014. The collaboration between animal health and human health professionals continues to be important. In Manitoba, regional Public Health assess potential human rabies exposures and associated risks. Private vets and veterinary clinics no longer need to communicate with the CFIA.

1. In situations where a veterinarian is made aware of a **potential human exposure to rabies**, your role is to **encourage the client to seek medical attention** via: Health Links (204-788-8200; 1-888-315-9257 toll free), local medical doctor/urgent care facility, or their regional Public Health office (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html>). You should also provide education to the client on the potential health risks to animals associated with rabies. In the event that the client cannot report an incident of possible exposure to the rabies virus, you can report the incident to the local public health office on the client's behalf and with their consent. Public Health will then be responsible for follow up.
2. If you contact the regional Public Health office about a potential human exposure to rabies, or a regional Public Health office contacts you, you **must share information pertinent to the rabies exposure with the Public Health official** (animal identification/ description, rabies vaccine history, animal health history related to the exposure, and other relevant information about the exposure.
3. In situations where there is potential **animal to animal exposure to rabies**, you will need to contact Manitoba Agriculture by calling 204-470-1108 (rabies line for animal-animal exposures).

Some Points to Consider:

- It is **strongly recommended** that a suspect animal be put under an observation period unless there are medical or welfare issues that require the animal to be euthanized. Call the rabies line 204-470-1108 for information on appropriate observation times for different animal species.

- If the animal is euthanized the remains must be held (frozen) until Public Health or Manitoba Rabies Central contacts you – to a maximum hold period of **5 business days**. If 5 days have elapsed with no contact from either office, the remains no longer need to be held (no confirmatory inquiry with either office is required).
- If regional Public Health determines the animal should be tested, you will be contacted by Manitoba Rabies Central who will facilitate collection of the sample.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the above processes, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for sharing this information with all relevant colleagues in your facility and for your continued cooperation with the Provincial Rabies Management Program.

Yours truly,



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Medical Officer of Health



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