

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 20, 2020

Dear Borough/Municipality Manager:

Over the past 19 years there has been a significant reduction in human and pet exposures to rabies throughout Allegheny County. This is largely due to the efforts of the rabies vaccination program for wild raccoons spearheaded by the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (USDA), who the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) partners with for this massive effort. This year, employees and volunteers of ACHD and the USDA will be distributing vaccine-containing baits from **July 31st through August 31st** across Allegheny County. Baits will be delivered in every municipality of the County. Your municipality will be baited by hand and from vehicles between July 31st and August 10th. The enclosed flyer contains images of the two types of bait: One is a plastic sachet (looks like a ketchup packet) coated in fish meal, the other is a plastic sachet enclosed in a fish meal block. The fish scent attracts the raccoons who consume the bait and vaccine, resulting in the development of antibodies to the rabies virus.

The risk of adverse effects to humans and animals due to exposure to the vaccine is minimal, but we urge the public to avoid contact with the bait if possible. If a stray bait must be moved, it should be picked up using rubber or latex gloves or a shovel. We are also asking the public to **keep their dogs on a leash, indoors, or confined to their property as much as possible during baiting and the week after.**

In years past, we have specifically had problems with off-leash dogs consuming the baits in parks. Parks are common raccoon habitats and are therefore important areas to bait. This interferes with their intended purpose and concerns and upsets citizens. A sign informing the public of this information that can be posted in parks can be found at: www.achd.net/raccoon.

We are requesting that you help us to publicize the baiting effort in municipal newsletters, publications, and on social media with the educational materials attached and found on our website here: www.achd.net/raccoon. We also request that you inform your Emergency Management Coordinator.

If you need further information, or would like more physical copies of the printed materials, please contact me, Lori Horowitz, ACHD Rabies Baiting Project Manager, via email lori.horowitz@alleghenycounty.us or at 412-350-4046. Please let me know if your municipality is planning an activity such as a Community Day during the baiting periods so that we can avoid placing the baits within the celebration area.

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We appreciate your continuing cooperation and thank you in advance for helping us to spread the word. Through this effort, we hope to reduce the likelihood of a human case of rabies in Allegheny County and surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lori Horowitz', with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

Lori Horowitz
ACHD Rabies Baiting Project Manager

Enclosures