

**NEWS RELEASE: Dutchess County Announces Collaboration with DCSPCA
for Rabies Clinics**

Poughkeepsie...The Dutchess County Department of Health announced today its partnership with the Dutchess County Society for the Prevention and Cruelty of Animals to provide free rabies vaccinations for pets. The clinic will be offered on **Saturday, October 18th** at **Dutchess County SPCA, 636 Violet Avenue, Hyde Park, NY 12538** from **8:00 am to 12:00 noon**. Dutchess County residents will be able to obtain rabies shots free of charge for their dogs, cats, and domestic ferrets 3 months of age and older. Non-residents will be charged \$10 for each pet vaccinated.

“I’m pleased to announce this partnership with Dutchess County SPCA since we share the goal of keeping pets healthy and safe from rabies,” said Dutchess County Commissioner of Health Kari Reiber, MD. “Properly immunized pets provide a barrier between rabid wildlife and humans. By protecting your pets, you also decrease your risk of exposure to the rabies virus.”

All dogs must be on leash, and cats and domestic ferrets will be in carriers. Vaccinations will be good for three years for pets with proper proof of a prior immunization. For those without proof, the vaccination will be good for one year.

“This free rabies clinic will be held inside our new Adoption and Education Center, which will allow us to share the new building with pet owners,” said Jackie Rose, Executive Director. “We want to encourage county residents to take advantage of this clinic to protect their pets from rabies and we look forward to hosting future free clinics in partnership with the Department of Health.” Rose also invites the community to celebrate the opening of their new animal shelter on November 14th from 1:30 to 4:00 pm.

In New York State, rabies shots are required for all cats, dogs, and domestic ferrets by the age of four months. Revaccination is then required on a regular schedule to keep the animal properly immunized against the rabies virus. Owners can be fined up to \$200 if they fail to get their pets vaccinated and keep them up-to-date.

Dr. Reiber reminds pet owners of the importance of vaccinating all dogs, cats, and ferrets, even if they are considered “house pets” and remain indoors. “There is always a chance your pet could be exposed to rabies, for example if a bat enters the home or your pet accidentally gets outside and encounters a rabid animal.”

If a pet is not up-to-date on its rabies vaccination and fights with a rabid or suspect-rabid animal, the pet must be promptly destroyed or placed in quarantine for six months to protect other animals and people in case the pet develops rabies. These mandates are not required for a vaccinated pet in the same situation. In such cases, only a booster dose of rabies vaccine would be given within five days to treat the pet.

The Department of Health is available around the clock to respond to inquiries or concerns regarding potential rabies exposures to people or domestic animals. Pet owners should report any incident in which their pet has been bitten by or has an open wound exposed to the saliva or nervous tissue of a domestic or wild animal to the Department. Staff will

investigate and advise the pet owner of any necessary steps that they should take to ensure the safety of their animal. Individuals with urgent inquiries may call [\(845\) 431-6465](tel:(845)431-6465) if an incident occurs after business hours. To learn more about rabies during business hours, call [\(845\) 486-3404](tel:(845)486-3404) or visit the Department's webpage at dutchessny.gov/health.

For Further Information:

Kari Reiber, MD, Acting Commissioner of Health [\(845\) 486-3432](tel:(845)486-3432)

###