



MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Health Departments, Regional Offices of IDPH

From: Communicable Disease Control Section

Date: December 21, 2016

Subject: Change in Animal Rabies Testing

The Illinois Department of Agriculture notified IDPH late last week that their Galesburg animal laboratory will no longer do animal rabies testing as of Wednesday, December 20. Until January 1, 2017, send any animal rabies specimens that would have gone to the Galesburg laboratory to the Illinois Department of Public Health laboratories in Chicago, Springfield or Carbondale. From January 1, 2016 to December 19, there were 243 total animals tested for rabies at the Galesburg laboratory.

A new laboratory, the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine laboratory in Champaign, Illinois, will begin doing animal rabies testing on December 20, 2016 but would prefer to start receiving animal rabies specimens starting on January 1, 2017. They do charge a fee for this testing (\$29 if brain is already removed; otherwise there will be an additional charge) payable by the submitter and will accept any type of mammal for testing. Their address is 2001 South Lincoln Ave., PO Box U, Urbana, IL 61802, 217-333-1620.

When a healthy dog, cat or ferret bites a person in a provoked manner the animal should be confined and observed for 10 days with no need for animal rabies testing unless they become ill during the 10 day period. If they are euthanized prior to the 10 day period they must be submitted for animal rabies testing per the Illinois Animal Control Act administered by the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Between January 1, 2016 and December 19, 2016, there were 3,465 specimens submitted for testing at the Illinois Department of Public Health laboratories and 1,671 (48 percent) of these specimens were dogs, cats or ferrets. It can cost \$232.78 per specimen to perform this testing. If 1,500 of these dogs, cats or ferrets could have been confined for 10 days rather than being tested, it would save the IDPH laboratory \$349,170.

Beginning on February 1, 2017, low risk healthy dogs, cats and ferrets which bite a person in a provoked manner and are euthanized before the 10 day confinement period after the bite should be submitted ONLY to the University of Illinois College of

Veterinary Medicine laboratory NOT the public health laboratories. This will allow the public health laboratories to focus on rapid turnaround time for high risk specimens including but not limited to bats, raccoons, skunks and animals with symptoms suggestive of rabies. Animal control agencies should work with the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine laboratory on shipping details and methods of payment.

Dogs, cats and ferrets that can still be submitted to the IDPH laboratory include:

- A dog, cat or ferret that has bitten someone in an unprovoked manner
- A dog, cat or ferret that becomes ill with signs of rabies during the 10 day confinement period
- A dog, cat or ferret that has signs of rabies

The reason for submission of a dog, cat or ferret to the IDPH laboratory should be stated on the IDPH animal rabies submission form.

Please share this information with your submitters and animal control partners. We do not have a listing of the submitters and animal control agencies for each county at this time so this message has not been sent to them directly.