Jefferson County
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

PRESS RELEASE

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Stray Cat Reported to Have Rabies

Watertown, NY June 20, 2019~ The New York State Department of Health laboratory has reported to the Jefferson County Public Health Service that a stray cat tested positive for rabies. The cat was located in the Town of Hounsfield with another cat and 3 kittens. All five animals were euthanized. There were no known human or other pet exposures.

Rabies is a fatal disease that attacks the brain and spinal cord. It can take several weeks to several months for rabies symptoms to appear. Early treatment after an exposure can prevent rabies in humans and in pets who are up to date on vaccination. Any mammal can get rabies, but it is most often seen in bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. Animals with rabies may be aggressive, sick or unusually friendly. Please take these steps to help prevent the spread of rabies:

- Teach children to stay away from unfamiliar animals, either wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. Remind them to tell you if they have any unusual contact with an animal.
- Be a responsible pet owner by keeping your pet's vaccinations current. Getting your pet vaccinated by your vet or at a clinic can help stop the spread of rabies from wild animals to humans. **Follow the JCPHS Facebook page to find upcoming clinic information as it is scheduled.**
- Do not leave pet food outside as it attracts wildlife to your home.
- Wash any wound from an animal encounter thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately**.**
- Monitor your pet when they are outside. If your pet is involved in an altercation with a wild animal, do not get in between them. Do not touch your pet without gloves as rabies is spread through saliva. Cover your pet with a towel and contact your vet as your pet may need a booster shot.

To find additional information about rabies go to www.jcphs.org

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