



Joint Agency Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 5, 2009

Contact: Greg Wilkinson, DHSS, (907) 269-7285, Cell (907) 382-7032 gregory.wilkinson@alaska.gov
Brooke Taylor, AACCC, (907) 343-8138, TaylorBD@ci.anchorage.ak.us

Bush dog brought to Anchorage tests positive for rabies

Owners reminded to vaccinate their pets

(Anchorage, AK) —The Municipality of Anchorage euthanized a husky-mix dog on March 1 after the dog, recently brought to Anchorage from the Bush, bit its Anchorage trainer on Feb. 27. The trainer and five other people who had close contact with the dog are receiving shots to prevent rabies.

Officials with the State Department of Health and Social Services, Section of Epidemiology received notification of the bite and contacted Anchorage Animal Control on Feb. 28. Three Animal Control officers responded to impound the animal that day. Testing by the state confirmed the dog had rabies.

The dog was rescued from a village in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region, where other dogs were attacked by a fox in February. The dog showed no sign of having been bitten by the fox and so was spared when the other dogs involved were euthanized by the village safety officer. The dog arrived in Anchorage on Feb. 16.

Officials with the state, the Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services, and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation have taken the proper precautions and safety measures in both the village and Anchorage area to ensure the safety of all staff and the general public. These measures included cleaning and disinfecting all areas where the dog had been held and investigating whether any other people or animals may have had contact with the dog. The investigation determined that the dog was kept confined or under its trainer's control since its arrival in Anchorage.

According to state records, this is the first time a rabid dog has been brought into Anchorage from the Bush since 1992. The general public should be aware of the following:

1. Any person bitten by an animal is required to report the incident to Animal Control, 343-8119. The public can help prevent the potential transmission of rabies by reporting all incidents.
2. All dogs, cats, and ferrets are required to be current on rabies vaccination in the Municipality of Anchorage. Rabies vaccinations help protect pets AND people.
3. Unless on the owner's property or a designated "leash-free" zone, all pets, cats and dogs must be restrained by leash or confined. This is for the animal's as well as the public's protection.

For more information on rabies, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>,
<http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/id/rabies/default.htm> or <http://www.muni.org/Healthmsd/animal.cfm>

###