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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### **Wolves killed near Village of Chignik Lake did not have rabies**

*Test results returned Thursday at Department of Health and Social Services Virology Lab*

(Anchorage, AK) — The two wolves shot and killed near the village of Chignik Lake earlier this week did not have rabies, according to test results reported today by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

The wolves were killed Monday as part of aerial response efforts by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. According to an earlier report by Fish & Game, the wolves matched descriptions of those seen at the site where a woman was recently killed in Chignik Lake. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game announced Wednesday that it had discontinued its search for additional wolves.

The wolves were flown to Fairbanks this week to be studied by the state wildlife veterinarian and by microbiologists at the Alaska State Virology Laboratory, operated by Health and Social Services. Microbiologists studied the brains of the wolves to look for rabies. Rabies is a virus that can be transmitted from rabid animals to either other animals or people, primarily through bite wounds. The virus attacks the central nervous system; without prompt treatment, rabies is fatal. More information about rabies is available at <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/rabies/default.htm>.

“Rabies remains a risk to both people and animals living in the Alaska Peninsula, as well as in other parts of northern and western Alaska where rabies is known to exist,” said Louisa Castrodale, veterinarian and epidemiologist with the Department of Health and Social Services.

“Animals may bite people when they are sick,” Castrodale said. “That said, animals also may bite when they are not sick, but are startled, hungry or being protective of other animals around them. People who are bitten by an animal should promptly report the bite to a local health official. People who see animals acting abnormally should report that behavior to a local wildlife or public safety official.”

The Department of Fish & Game is testing the wolves for additional diseases, including the distemper virus. Those test results are not yet available.

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