



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

nyc.gov/health

2006 Medical Alert #11

Raccoon Rabies on Staten Island

Identification of Two Rabid Raccoons in the Charleston and Pleasant Plains Neighborhoods of Southern Staten Island

- On April 6, 2006 a raccoon captured in the Charleston section of southern Staten Island tested positive for rabies. A second raccoon found in the nearby Pleasant Plains section tested positive on May 1, 2006.
- Both animals were exhibiting signs of illness and there were no reported human exposures to these animals.
- Rabies post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) should be provided to any patient presenting with an animal bite if the animal:
 - is a known rabies vector (raccoon, skunk, bat or fox) and
 - the animal is unavailable for testing, or
 - is displaying signs of rabies, or
 - is a dog or cat and is unavailable for confinement and/or observation.
- Do not consider PEP for bites from small rodents (e.g., squirrels) and lagomorphs (rabbits) unless there are unusual circumstances
- All animal bites should be reported to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (see contact information below).

Please share with your colleagues in emergency medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, family practice, and infectious disease

May 4, 2006

Dear Colleagues,

Two rabid raccoons from the southwest section of Staten Island (see map below) have tested positive for rabies. The first raccoon was picked up by Animal Care and Control (ACC) on April 4th and tested positive at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Rabies Laboratory on April 6th. The raccoon was captured near a state park (Clay Pit Ponds) and the Arthur Kill, a waterway that separates New Jersey from Staten Island. The second animal was found on April 26th approximately two miles from the first animal and tested positive on May 1st. Both animals appeared to be ill at time of capture. There were no known human or animal exposures from these two raccoons.

Raccoon rabies was first identified on Staten Island in 1992 and by 1996 the virus was largely eliminated from terrestrial animals on the island following an outbreak of distemper and rabies among raccoons, although it was still being reported in bats. Until the two rabid raccoons identified during recent weeks, Staten Island had remained free of raccoon rabies from 1997 through the present, except for one rabid raccoon in 2000, which was determined to be an isolated incident. A rabid bat was identified in Staten

Island in 2001. To date, a total of 65 positive raccoons including the two found last month, have tested positive for the virus in Staten Island since terrestrial rabies first appeared there in 1992.

As of May 1st, 2006 these are the only two animals that have tested positive in New York City by the DOHMH Rabies Laboratory this year. It is too early to predict whether these two raccoons provide evidence of renewed enzootic transmission of rabies among raccoons on Staten Island, or whether additional cases will occur this year, but the DOHMH will enhance surveillance and monitor the situation. No human cases of rabies have occurred in New York City in more than 50 years.

Animal Rabies Cases by Borough 2000-2005						
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bronx	16	31	22	6	13	26
Brooklyn	1	1	1	0	0	1
Manhattan	0	2	5	0	0	0
Staten Island	1	1	0	0	1	0
Queens	0	3	0	0	0	1

If a person is exposed to rabies as defined below, human rabies PEP is recommended if the animal is found to be rabid or if rabies cannot be ruled out. If the animal is available for testing or is a dog, cat or ferret that is available for observation, PEP can be withheld in most instances.

According to the federal Rabies Prevention (1999) Recommendations of the Immunizations Practices Committee (ACIP), exposure is defined as a bite from a rabid animal or contamination of scratches, abrasions, open wounds or mucous membranes with saliva or other potentially infectious material (such as brain tissue) from a rabid animal. **"Other contact by itself, such as petting a rabid animal and contact with the blood, urine, or feces (e.g., guano) of a rabid animal, does not constitute an exposure and is not an indication for prophylaxis."** The ACIP guidelines are available on our website at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/cd/cd-cdrab-mmwr-1999.pdf> and an easy to follow colored poster algorithm is available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/cd/cd-cdrab-pvtalgo.pdf>. We recommend posting this poster prominently in areas such as emergency rooms or urgent care centers where patients with possible exposures to rabies may present for care.

- ❑ For more information or consultation on suspected human exposures to rabies, or any suspected human rabies cases call the DOHMH Bureau of Communicable Disease at 212-788-9830. After hours and on weekends call Poison Control at 212-POISONS or 212-764-7667.
- ❑ All animal bites should be reported to Veterinary Public Health Services (VPHS) at 212-676-2483. Please also call for information on animal confinement or testing.
- ❑ Additional information on rabies is available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cd/cdrab.shtml>

As always, we appreciate your continued collaboration with our efforts to protect the public health in New York City.

Sincerely,

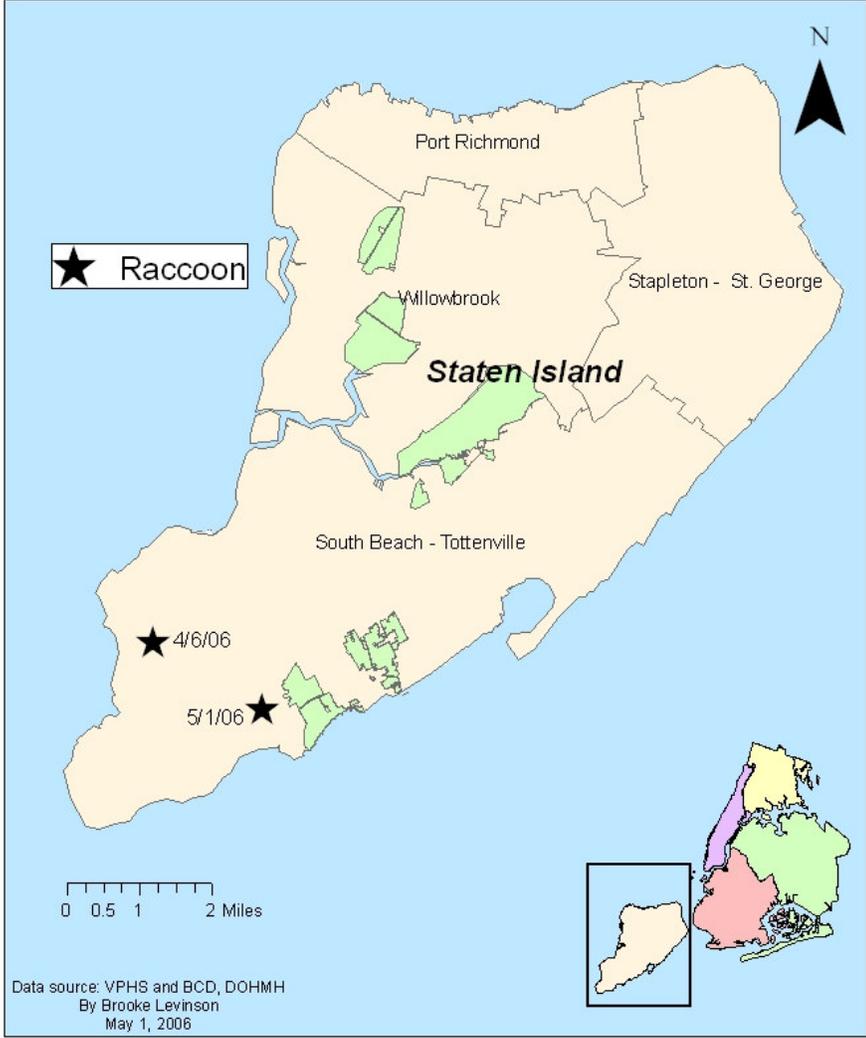
Sally Slavinski, DVM, MPH, ACVPM

Sally Slavinski, DVM, MPH, ACVPM
Zoonotic and Vector Borne Disease Unit
Bureau of Communicable Disease

Annie Fine, MD

Annie Fine, MD
Zoonotic and Vector Borne Disease Unit
Bureau of Communicable Disease

Rabid Raccoons in Staten Island YTD 2006



* Date Collected