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For Immediate Release

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Positive Rabies Case in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed a positive rabies case in an animal in the health district. The positive rabies test was from a skunk in Chase County.

“Animals are out and about now that the weather is warmer, and animal moms may be very protective of new babies,” explains Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager with SWNPHD. “If you see a wild animal or an animal you do not know, give it plenty of space and admire it from a distance. This will help keep you and the animal safe.”

Skunks are one of the most common carriers of rabies in southwest Nebraska. In skunks as in other warm-blooded animals, rabies is a severe, rapidly progressing neurological disease. It spreads through saliva or spit, most commonly through contact with an infected wild animal.

Rabies should be suspected in all animals that show a sudden change in behavior that is different from normal, such as animals normally active at night being seen during the day. Signs of rabies in animals may include any of the following:

- Increased aggression
- Odd behavior changes, nervousness, irritability
- Difficulty eating or drinking
- Excessive drooling

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rabies is a medical emergency. Any person with a suspected exposure should wash wounds immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention from a healthcare professional right away. Rabies is a deadly viral infection that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals if not treated quickly after an exposure.

The best method to prevent rabies exposure is to ensure that pets, livestock, and horses are protected against rabies with current vaccinations. Contact your local veterinarian or SWNPHD regarding rabies vaccination, testing, and exposures.

For more information contact Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow SWNPHD on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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