



## St. Mary's County Health Department

### NEWS RELEASE

[www.smchd.org](http://www.smchd.org)

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#### CAT TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES IN WILDEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD.

LEONARDTOWN, MD (September 27, 2006) -- St. Mary's County Health Department reports that a cat, captured after attacking two people in the Wildwood neighborhood last weekend, has tested positive for rabies. The positive test result came late Tuesday from the State's lab at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in Baltimore. Residents of Wildewood are being alerted to the test result and asked to report any additional contacts involving bites or scratches by unknown cats to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.

Rabies is a preventable viral disease most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. County residents are urged to contact the sheriff's office at 301-475-8008 to report animal bites or scratches. The health department investigates reports of animal bites, and based on the outcome of the investigation provides post-exposure treatment to people who are at risk for contracting the disease.

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“It is troubling to see rabies in the domestic animal population, because our domestic animals are recognized as the first line of defense against rabies contact in the human population, “ said Community Health Services Director Nancy Luginbill, RN. “This is the time of year that people enjoy being outside, and people need to be reminded of the risk of approaching unknown animals, including domesticated pets.”

The health department is reminding residents throughout the county, and especially residents in and around the Wildewood area, of the importance of protecting our domestic pet population as a way of safeguarding themselves and their families. The following measures are recommended:

- For the protection of you, your family, and your neighbors, vaccinate, collar and tag your pet. Check with your veterinarian to be sure your pet’s immunizations are up to date.
- Limit outdoor food supplies that may attract animals to your property.
- Do not approach unknown animals.
- Report bites and scratches by any animal to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's office at 301-475-8008.

The Animal Welfare League will offer two more rabies vaccine clinics this year. The next clinic is Monday, Oct. 9, 6-8 p.m. at the St. Mary's County Fairground in

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Leonardtown near the 4-H Building. November's clinic will be Monday, Nov. 13. The cost is \$10 per shot.

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