



## **OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RABIES PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM**

Updated: September 6, 2018

### **INTRODUCTION**

Alaska has a long and intimate history with rabies. There have been 3 confirmed human rabies cases in the State, with *many* confirmed cases of rabies in an assortment of different mammals through the years. The rabies virus can cause acute encephalitis in all warm-blooded hosts, including pets, wildlife and humans; the outcome of an infection is almost always fatal. In Alaska, rabies is endemic (*always* present) among the fox populations along the northern and western coastal areas, including in the Bering Strait Region.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

In order to help protect the health of the people living in the Bering Strait Region, Norton Sound Health Corporation-Office of Environmental Health (NSHC-OEH) manages a Rabies Prevention and Control Program as part of their standard scope of services. The following services and activities are included in this Program:

- Disseminate relevant information to the public, Lay Vaccinators, City/Tribal leadership, and health care providers. (i.e. confirmed cases of rabies, SOA post-exposure prophylaxis updates, education outreach about rabies and the need for pet vaccinations, etc.)
- Participate in the State of Alaska's (SOA) Lay Vaccinator Program, maintain full reporting compliance.
- Recruit/train/certify/support Lay Vaccinators in all the villages + provide all vaccination supplies.
- Maintain a full stock of rabies vaccination supplies. (i.e. vaccine, needles, certificates, tags, etc.)
- Conduct animal bite investigations for the villages.
- Coordinate with Nome's Animal Control Officer, as needed, for Nome animal bite investigations.
- Coordinate with SOA Virology Lab for specimen submittals.
- Coordinate with SOA's Section of Epidemiology and NSHC medical staff with any potential outbreaks.
- Provide rabies vaccinations throughout the region.
- Coordinate with NSHC medical staff and SOE for post-exposure prophylaxis needs.
- Recruit and coordinate Veterinarian group travel to the villages.

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