

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 24, 2021

Dear Borough/Municipality Manager:

Over the past 20 years, there has been a significant reduction in human and pet exposures to the rabies virus throughout Allegheny County. This is largely due to the efforts of the rabies vaccination program for wild raccoons, spearheaded by the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (USDA), in partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). This year, employees and volunteers from both organizations will be distributing vaccine-containing baits from **July 29<sup>th</sup> through September 15<sup>th</sup>** across Allegheny County.

The baits will be being delivered both by hand from ground vehicles and by aircraft, including helicopter and fixed wing airplanes. The aircraft will be flying low over residential area and at times, residents may see aircraft moving slowly over the same area repeatedly within a short period of time. As this could be alarming if the residents are unaware of what is happening, we are asking the municipalities to join us in getting the word out about the baiting and when it will be happening in an effort to minimize upset to the public. Hand baiting will occur from August 2<sup>nd</sup> through August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Please see enclosed flyer for images of what the baits look like. There are three different vaccines you could see- a vaccine packet inside a fishmeal block, a packet coated in fishmeal, or a packet coated in vanilla, all of which are very tasty to raccoons. The scent attracts the raccoons who consume the bait and vaccine, resulting in the development of antibodies to the rabies virus.

The risk of adverse effects to humans and animals due to exposure to the vaccine is minimal, but we urge the public to avoid contact with the bait if possible. If a stray bait must be moved, it should be picked up using rubber or latex gloves or a shovel. **We are also asking the public to keep their dogs on a leash, indoors, or confined to their property as much as possible during baiting and the week after.**

In years past, we have specifically had problems with off-leash dogs consuming the baits in parks. Parks are common raccoon habitats and are therefore important areas to bait. This interferes with their intended purpose and concerns and upsets citizens. A sign informing the public of this information that can be posted in parks can be found at: [www.achd.net/raccoon](http://www.achd.net/raccoon).

We are requesting that you help us to publicize the baiting effort in municipal newsletters, publications, and on social media with the educational materials attached and found on our website here: [www.achd.net/raccoon](http://www.achd.net/raccoon). We also request that you inform your Emergency Management Coordinator.

If you need further information, or would like more physical copies of the printed materials, please contact me, Jamie Sokol, ACHD Rabies Baiting Project Manager, via email [jamie.sokol@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:jamie.sokol@alleghenycounty.us) or at 412-350-4046. Please let me know if your municipality is planning an activity such as a Community Day during the baiting periods so that we can avoid placing the baits within the celebration area.

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