Note: This has been approved by the Department of Health for use by county PIOs during a public health incident. Please be sure to add appropriate letterhead before distributing.

**UPDATED: 11/2016**

**For Immediate Release** Contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**HEALTH OFFICIALS LIFT RABIES ALERT**

**[Town/City/County]—**The Florida Department of Health in [insert county] (DOH-County) is lifting the rabies alert for [insert area]. The alert has been in place since [DATE] when a [insert animal] tested positive for rabies.

There has not been another positive laboratory result for rabies within [#] days. This is an appropriate timeframe to lift the health advisory. However, in Florida there is a risk of rabies transmission year round.

The following are steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones against rabies:

* Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets and at-risk livestock.
* Do not allow your pets to run free. Follow leash laws by keeping pets and livestock secured on your property. If your pet or livestock are bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact [Insert County] Animal Services at [Insert contact number].
* Support animal control in efforts to reduce feral and stray animal populations.
* Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.
* **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with outdoor food sources such as uncovered trash or litter.
* **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
* Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
* Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people and pets.
* Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the DOH-[insert county] at [phone].

For further information on rabies, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html>, or contact DOH-[Insert County] at [Insert Contact Number].

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida

through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at @HealthyFla and on Facebook. For more information about the Florida

Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).

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