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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:****Bat Tests Positive for Rabies in Outagamie County**

Outagamie County, WI – August 21, 2025 — Outagamie County Public Health is urging residents to take precautions after a bat recently tested positive for rabies in the county. According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, there have been 19 total reported positive rabies results in the state in 2025 so far.

Rabies is a fatal but preventable viral disease most often spread to people and pets through the bite or scratch of an infected animal. With human rabies rare in the US, the most recent positive test of rabies in a bat serves as an important reminder of the need to protect both people and pets.

Ways to Prevent Rabies

- Keep your dogs, cats, ferrets, and other animals up-to-date on vaccines
 - All dogs, cats, and ferrets are required by law to be vaccinated against rabies
- Never touch bats or wild animals
- Do not let pets roam free
- Do not attract wild animals
 - Cover garbage cans securely and do not leave food outside
- Prevent bats from entering your home.
 - If a bat is found inside your home, do not release it until you have spoken with the health department, as testing may be necessary

“Keeping pets up to date on their rabies vaccination is the most effective way to protect your family and community,” said Natalie Vandeveld, Health Officer of Outagamie County Public Health. “Rabies is nearly always fatal once symptoms appear, but it is entirely preventable with vaccination.”

One of the most effective ways to prevent rabies infection is immediate, thorough cleansing of the animal bite or scratch wound with plenty of soap and water for 10-15 minutes. Seek medical attention right away.

For questions about rabies exposure, contact Outagamie County Public Health at 920-832-5100.

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Outagamie County Public Health (OCPH) is a division of the Health and Human Services Department of Outagamie County. OCPH consists of 4 units: Community Health, Environmental Health, Public Health Nursing, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Our mission is to PREVENT disease and injury, PROMOTE wellness, and PROTECT the health of the community. We strive to do that by listening to our residents and using data, evidence, and research to offer solutions. We work to bring together different organizations to make decisions and take action. Our public health experts also investigate everything that affects our health – food, water, air, and more to prevent problems before they start. For more information visit our website: www.outagamie.org/PublicHealth