



**APRIL 1, 2010**

## **HEALTH ADVISORY**

### **Shelter Dog in Grand Forks Tests Positive For Rabies**

A dog being held by the Circle of Friends Humane Society Shelter in Grand Forks was diagnosed with rabies on March 31, 2010. This animal was brought in as a stray with another dog on March 9. Both animals were held in isolation until March 15, after which time the general public may have had a chance to interact with them.

On March 19, the larger of the two animals “Bingo” was euthanized because it was felt he would not be a good candidate for adoption. Bingo was never tested for rabies. On March 20, the smaller dog “Cookie” went to a foster home. On March 25, Cookie became ill and on March 27 was euthanized. The brain was submitted for rabies testing and was found to be positive for rabies.

Exposure to either of these dogs may have resulted in the transmission of rabies. Cookie may have been shedding virus in the saliva as early as March 15. Because the rabies status of Bingo is unknown, an exposure to this animal in the shelter during this time also should be considered in evaluating the need for post-exposure prophylaxis.

The critical time period for exposure to the dogs by the general public visiting the shelter is from March 15 through March 20. People visiting the shelter during these dates and had direct exposure to the saliva of either of these two dogs may have been exposed to rabies. Saliva exposure may occur in three ways:

1. A bite from the infected animal
2. Saliva entering into an open wound
3. Saliva coming into contact with mucous membranes

Bite exposures carry the highest risk of rabies transmission. Non-bite exposures carry a much lower risk of rabies transmission. People who do not meet the above criteria are not at risk for rabies and do not need to receive rabies post-exposure prophylaxis.

Those that do meet the conditions of an exposure should begin rabies post-exposure prophylaxis as soon as possible. The need to initiate post-exposure prophylaxis is not an emergency but should be viewed as an urgent medical matter.

If a patient seen at your facility was exposed, please contact the Grand Forks Public Health Department at 701.787.8100 or the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180 to aid in the coordination of post-exposure treatment for that patient. Further information can be found at [www.ndhealth.gov/disease/rabies](http://www.ndhealth.gov/disease/rabies) or by calling 1.800.472.2180.

*Categories of Health Alert messages:*

- *Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.*
- *Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.*
- *Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.*
- *Health Information provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.*

*This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, and hospital public information officers.*