



## ***St. Lawrence County Public Health Department***

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### **Press Release**

Date: September 26, 2025  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **St. Lawrence County Public Health Department Recognizes World Rabies Day**

In honor of World Rabies Day on September 28, the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department (SLCPHD) is celebrating progress in the fight against rabies. World Rabies Day is a time when people all over the world work to raise awareness about rabies and how to prevent it. Rabies is a deadly disease that affects both animals and people, but it can be prevented through vaccination.

Since the 1990's, the number of animals testing positive for rabies in New York State has dropped significantly, with 2,747 animals testing positive in 1993 to 315 animals in 2024. This happened thanks to a strong partnership with people and organizations, including:

- Surrounding County Public Health Departments
- New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYS AGM)
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC)
- Dog Control Officers
- Veterinarians
- Towns/Villages
- Healthcare providers
- Other community partners
- Residents of St. Lawrence County.

SLCPHD helps to reduce cases of rabies by:

- Holding free rabies vaccine clinics for dogs, cats, and ferrets.
  - So far in 2025, 1,250 dogs, 479 cats, and 9 other animals were vaccinated at community clinics.
- Testing animals as needed to determine whether an exposed person needs treatment to prevent rabies.

- Arranging treatment (rabies post-exposure prophylaxis) for individuals who meet NYS DOH criteria.
- Responding to rabies questions and reviewing situations with residents and healthcare providers 24/7.
- Teaching people how to stay safe around animals.
- Offering rabies preexposure vaccines for people at higher risk in our clinic for a fee.

Even with this success, rabies is still found in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, and bats in New York State.

#### What You Can Do:

- Vaccinate your pets, even indoor-only pets, and keep shots up to date.
  - One more clinic is scheduled for 2025 in October. To learn more, visit: [www.stlawrencecountyny.gov/publichealth/rabies](http://www.stlawrencecountyny.gov/publichealth/rabies)
- Stay away from wild animals. Only trained wildlife handlers should help wild animals.
- Keep garbage and pet food inside so wild animals aren't attracted to your yard.
- Report any humans bitten by an animal to SLCPHD at 315-386-2325.

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