

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

August 18, 2009

TO: All Local Animal Control Agencies, Local Health Departments and Rabies Specimen Submitters

FROM: Hugh Maguire & Laura Gillim-Ross, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment Laboratory
Elisabeth Lawaczeck, State Public Health Veterinarian

SUBJECT: Submission of Animal Specimens to the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment Laboratory
for late 2009 & early 2010

The purpose of this letter is to provide the 2009 & early 2010 policy for use of state general funds for testing animal specimens at the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) Laboratory for rabies, plague, and tularemia. For the remainder of 2009 through end of May 2010, CDPHE has identified a limited amount of state general funds for testing animals for rabies, plague, and tularemia. **In order for animal testing to be paid for with state funds, CDPHE will require that animal specimens meet the following criteria:**

Rabies

1. Skunks, foxes, raccoons, coyotes & bobcats that are suspected of being rabid OR have bitten or otherwise exposed a human, pet, or livestock
2. Other wild carnivores that are suspected of being rabid OR have bitten or otherwise exposed a human, pet, or livestock.
3. Bats with known or suspect exposure*
 - a. Example of known/suspect exposure: bite to human or pet (or pet has bat in mouth), direct skin contact with a human, found inside home, grounded in a yard with an unattended pet or children. Bats found on school grounds, playgrounds or day care centers with children present can be submitted, even without known contact. *Additional guidance for assessing possible exposure to rabies from bats is available from the Advisory Commission on Immunization Practices on Human Rabies Prevention, 2008 (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr57e507a1.htm>)
 - b. **Bats found sick, dying, or dead outdoors where there is no known or suspected exposure to humans or domestic animals should not be submitted or will be considered as fee for service (\$65) and the submitting agency billed.**
 - c. If the criteria for use of state general funds for rabies testing of bats are met, the submission form should include "bite to human or pet," or if CDPHE epidemiologists approve, then "Approved by Janell Kenfield or Dr. Lawaczeck"

The following submissions for rabies testing will be billed to the submitter as fee for service:

1. domestic animals & livestock
2. bats when exposure has been ruled out
3. rodents and rabbits (wild or domestic)

Plague and Tularemia

1. Wild rodents (e.g. prairie dogs; rock, ground, and tree squirrels) and wild lagomorphs (rabbits and hares) carcasses from a reported die-off. (PCR)
2. Flea pools collected from animals or burrows associated from a rodent die-off (PCR)
3. Diagnostic specimens from cats (both domestic and wild) in which the veterinarian is considering a diagnosis of plague or tularemia. (DFA & culture)

Animal specimens being submitted for rabies, plague or tularemia testing that do not meet these criteria will be considered Fee-for-Service and the submitting agency billed unless prior approval has been obtained from CPDHE!

Please refer to existing CPDHE guidance and policies on submission of laboratory specimens for zoonoses on the CDPHE webpage: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis>, or more directly, for submissions for rabies testing: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/rabies/RabiesSubmissionpolicy05.pdf>, and for submission of specimens from cats for plague testing: http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/plague/plague_feline_policy.pdf

For consultation on the need to conduct testing of individual animals or to obtain approval for testing to be costs to be covered by CDPHE contact the Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program at CDPHE at 303-692-2700.