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“Working towards a healthy and safe Putnam County”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 18, 2024

Contact: Kim Rieman, Health Commissioner
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The Putnam County Health Department has received confirmation from the Ohio Department of Health that a bat from our county has tested positive for rabies. A resident from Union Township brought a bat to the health department for testing after an incident with their dog. This is the first rabid bat to test positive in Putnam County since 2006. Rabies is a viral disease that affects the nervous system of mammals and can be transmitted through the saliva of an infected animal.

According to Health Commissioner, Kim Rieman, “Bats provide many benefits such as pollination and pest control but are also a known source of rabies.” Rieman added, “Residents should not fear spending time outside, but exercise caution around bats due to the risk of rabies.” Pets should be kept nearby and monitored for any signs of illness.

Humans and pets can be exposed to rabies when they are bitten or scratched by an infected bat. In the case of a known exposure, or if one is found in a residence and it is unknown if there was exposure, it should be carefully collected while avoiding direct contact with the bat. The health department should then be contacted to determine if the bat should be tested. It is important to contact your primary care physician if you are concerned about exposure to an infected animal.

Rabies is almost always fatal to pets. It is strongly recommended to vaccinate all outdoor and indoor dogs, cats and ferrets over four months of age. Vaccination protects pets and their families by providing a barrier against the spread of disease.

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