Rabies Vaccination Clinics: VPH-23 Notice of Intent Forms Due by December 1st

Date: October 26, 2026

Public Health Message Type: ☐ Alert ☐ Advisory ☐ Update ☒ Information

Intended Audience:
☐ All public health partners ☐ Healthcare providers
☐ Infection preventionists ☒ Local health departments
☐ Schools/Childcare centers ☒ ACOs
☒ Animal health professionals ☒ Other: Municipal government

Key Points:

- Local jurisdictions planning to conduct rabies vaccination clinics between **January and June 2027** must submit the VPH-23 Notice of Intent forms to NJDOH by **December 1, 2026.**
- Rabies vaccination clinics are an important public health service for New Jersey residents. These clinics allow NJ residents to have their cats and dogs vaccinated for free, thus helping to prevent cases of rabies and potential rabies exposures in NJ. Local Boards of Health must provide rabies vaccination clinics at least once each year, in accordance with the Public Health Practice Standards of Performance for Local Boards of Health in New Jersey (N.J.A.C 8:52). The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) provides free rabies vaccine for use at these rabies clinics.

- **NEW!** NJDOH has developed a "Free Rabies Vaccination Clinic" promotional material for municipalities to use when promoting the free rabies vaccination clinics to increase awareness and turnout at the clinics in their area. This material is posted on the Communicable Disease Service (CDS) Rabies Website and municipalities should edit the pdf to include their agency and clinic information before dissemination.
- **NEW!** To promote the need for pet adoption and fostering, and local shelters, NJDOH has developed a "Shelter Flyer for Adopting and Fostering" that municipalities can customize and post at the free rabies vaccination clinics. This material is posted on the Veterinary Public Health website.

Action Items:

- On or before **December 1, 2026**, email completed VPH-23 Notice of Intent Forms to zoonoticrn@doh.nj.gov or fax to 609-826-4874 for rabies vaccine clinics that will be held

between January and June 2027. Late submissions may delay vaccine delivery and result in clinic cancellations.

- Review the **Rabies Vaccination Clinic Reminders** (below) with all staff involved in vaccine receipt, storage, transport, and administration, including veterinarians who will administer vaccines at the free rabies vaccination clinics.
- Customize and use the NJDOH Free Rabies Vaccination Clinic promotional material to increase public awareness about the vaccination clinics and consider posting the Shelter Flyer for Adopting and Fostering at clinics to encourage pet adoption and fostering.
- After each rabies vaccine clinic:
    - Submit a VPH-25 Rabies Clinic Report form to zoonoticrn@doh.nj.gov or fax to 609-826-4874 within 10 days after the clinic date. Ensure that the vaccine lot number is recorded on this form.
    - Return unused vaccines and NJDOH vaccination certificates to county distribution centers within 5 days after the clinic date.
- County distribution centers should submit monthly logs detailing the distribution and return of rabies vaccines and vaccination certificates to zoonoticrn@doh.nj.gov.

Contact Information

CDS Veterinary Public Health Unit: zoonoticrn@doh.nj.gov or 609-826-4872

Resources

- CDS Rabies Website: https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/rabies.shtml
- Forms
    - VPH-23, Rabies Vaccination Clinic Notice of Intent Form: https://www.nj.gov/health/forms/vph-23.pdf and instructions: https://www.nj.gov/health/forms/vph-23instr_1.pdf
    - VPH-25: Rabies Vaccination Clinic Report Form: https://www.nj.gov/health/forms/vph-25.pdf
- Promotional Materials
    - Free Rabies Vaccination Clinics Flyer: https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/rabies/rabies-clinic-flyer-customizable.pdf
    - Shelter Flyer for Adopting and Fostering: https://www.nj.gov/health/vph/documents/LHD-animalshelter_adopt_flyer.pdf

NJDOH Rabies Vaccination Clinic Reminders

- While NJDOH provides free rabies vaccines to local health departments and municipalities, local officials are responsible for ensuring appropriate vaccine storage and handling.
    - Store IMRAB 3 rabies vaccines at **2-8°C (35-46°F)** in standard refrigerators that meet this temperature range. Vaccine must always be maintained in this temperature range (between 35-46°F), including when in transit and during the rabies vaccination clinics. **Do NOT freeze the vaccine.**
    - Refrigerators should be continuously monitored to ensure appropriate temperature and a backup plan should be in place to prevent the loss of vaccine due to refrigerator failures. This includes plans for storms or other weather events that may result in a loss of electricity.

- County distribution centers, local health departments, and/or other local officials should check their rabies vaccine supply and safely dispose of expired rabies vaccines as regulated medical waste.
    - In addition to checking expiration date, ensure that the integrity of rabies vaccines has been maintained. Check open packages to ensure that lot numbers of vials match and that different lots haven't been mixed or added to open packages, that vials have not been punctured, and that the vaccine otherwise appears in good condition and has been maintained under proper storage. If there are any noted defects or concerns with the vaccines, contact both the manufacturer and NJDOH.

- All rabies vaccines in NJ must be administered by a duly licensed veterinarian.

- Syringes should NOT be prefilled, as this may compromise the safety of the vaccine. The sterility and viability of vaccine stored in syringes cannot be guaranteed. Vaccine should be drawn at the time of the clinic and only for the number of animals that are currently present at the clinic. The vaccine should be administered at the time it is drawn from the vial. Dispose of any punctured vials (do not return to the distribution center) and record unused vaccine in punctured vials as breakage or loss on the VPH-25 Rabies Clinic Report form.

- An initial rabies vaccine confers immunity for one year, regardless of the animal's age. A booster dose should be administered one year later. An IMRAB 3 booster dose confers immunity for three years. At the vaccination clinics, review documentation of prior

rabies vaccination to determine the duration of immunity. A valid rabies vaccination certificate indicating proof of previous rabies vaccination should be presented by the owner if the cat or dog is receiving a booster dose.

- If NJDOH rabies vaccination certificates are used, they should NOT be completed in advance. The number of certificates is limited and unused certificates need to be returned to the county distribution center for use at other clinics. If a local jurisdiction prefers to use pre-filled certificates at their clinics, they should either print or purchase their own supply.