Dear King County Veterinarian,

“I truly believe that animal and public health are at a crossroads. No other profession has as much impact on the health of both animals and people. The convergence of animal, human and environmental health dictates that the “one health” concept be embraced, and that the veterinary medical profession takes on the responsibility of assuming a major leadership role in that effort”.

AVMA Past-President Dr. Roger Mahr writing in the One Health newsletter

To further our common goals of protecting animal, human, and environmental health, we have assembled this binder of resources for veterinarians. In it you will find information on regulations pertaining to disease control, reporting and animal movement; disease fact sheets; client education handouts; lists of important contacts; and the compendia published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians.

I’d like to call your attention to several sections. The first is Section 4 (Rabies). Seattle and King County have required pet rabies vaccination for decades, but rabies vaccinations are now required statewide for dogs, cats and ferrets (as of 1/1/2012). We encourage you to assure that your canine, feline, and ferret patients are vaccinated by 4 months of age and to use reminder systems to bring them back in for booster vaccinations.

By the way, indoor cats need rabies vaccinations too. Not only is it the law, but you would be surprised at the number of resourceful ‘strictly indoor’ cats that manage to catch bats each summer by hunting off condo balconies or capturing bats that fly in open windows or emerge from fireplaces. In such cases, if the bat is rabid or can’t be tested for rabies, the cat requires a strict 6 month quarantine, or sometimes is even euthanized. Let’s prevent these tragic situations by keeping indoor cats protected by rabies vaccination.

Also new is a change in the statewide requirements for reporting of animal bites to people. Prior to January 1, 2012, state and local regulations required reporting of all animal bites to the local health jurisdiction. Reporting has now been changed to include only those bites that present a potential risk of rabies transmission. That means ‘routine’ dog and cat bites do not need to be reported; however, bites from a dog, cat, ferret or any other animal with clinical signs or behavior suggestive of rabies should be reported to the local health department immediately for evaluation. Health care providers should also continue to report bites from wildlife capable of carrying rabies including bats, raccoons, coyotes, skunks, bobcats, and other wild carnivores.

Speaking of bobcats, we have had reports lately of bobcats or lynx kept as pets biting people – usually family members. These bites can be severe, and may result in the animal
having to be euthanized and tested for rabies. Veterinarians should be aware that it is illegal to keep bobcats, lynx, wolves or wolf-hybrids, raccoons, skunks, and certain other types of wild animals or exotics as pets. The complete state and county regulations can be found in Section 7 of this resource guide.

In Section 12 (Infection Control & Disease Prevention in Veterinary Practices) you will find the **Compendium of Standard Veterinary Precautions**. I serve on this Compendium committee with fellow public health veterinarians and representatives of the AVMA, CDC, CSTE, and the National Association of Veterinary Technicians, so naturally I have a special interest in urging every veterinary practice to develop an infection control plan. The Compendium defines norms for infection control in veterinary practices and contains a model infection control plan template that you can use to develop your own practice-specific plan.

You can keep this resource binder current by periodically consulting Public Health’s Zoonotic Disease website for updates. We will maintain a complete copy of the latest manual at: [www.kingcounty.gov/health/zoonotics](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/zoonotics).

I welcome your feedback on this resource guide and how Public Health can better partner with you and other health professionals for the benefit of all.

Sincerely,

Sharon G. Hopkins, DVM, MPH
Public Health Veterinarian
Section 1: Introduction

1-1. Purpose of this manual - letter from Public Health-Seattle & King County (PHKSC)

Information & resources

Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC)
www.kingcounty.gov/health (main website)

Environmental Health Services Division
401 5th Avenue, Suite 1100, Seattle, WA 98104, Phone: (206) 263-9566
Fax: (206) 296-0189, www.kingcounty.gov/healthServices/health/ehs.aspx

Public Health Veterinarian (Environmental Health Services Division)
Dr. Sharon Hopkins, Phone: (206) 263-8454, E-mail: sharon.hopkins@kingcounty.gov
After-hours phone number: (206) 726-2454

Communicable Disease Epidemiology & Immunization Section (Prevention Division):
401 5th Avenue, suite 900, Seattle, WA 98104, Phone: (206) 296-4774,
Fax: (206) 296-4803, www.kingcounty.gov/healthServices/health/communicable.aspx
Telephone hotline with updates on diseases and outbreaks: (206) 296-4949

Dead bird reporting (Environmental Health Services Division)
Website: http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/westnile.aspx
Phone: 206-263-9566
West Nile Virus Informational Hotline: 206-205-3883
Reporting website: https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/portal/ehs/odbrs/

Newsletters
EpiTrend (WA Department of Health)

Other resources
Washington State Department of Health, Zoonotic Disease Program
Phone: (360) 236-3372, www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/ZOO.HTM
Dr. Ron Worhle, Public Health Veterinarian, Phone: (360) 236-3369,
E-mail: ron.wohrle@doh.wa.gov

Washington State Department of Agriculture, Animal Resources
Phone: (360) 902-1878, http://agr.wa.gov/Portals/An/
Dr. Leonard Eldrige, State Veterinarian, E-mail: ahealth@agr.wa.gov

Washington Poison Control Center
Hotline 1-800-222-1222, www.wapc.org/

Washington State University, Zoonosis Research Unit
www.vetmed.wsu.edu/orgWSU-ZRU/

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