



## **Rabies Clinics in Virginia: What Veterinarians Need to Know**

For veterinarians who may be participating in or have questions about rabies vaccination clinics, below is some basic information that will help clarify certain issues associated with these clinics. Rabies vaccinations may be offered outside of a licensed veterinary facility provided certain conditions are met. While rabies clinics held in a licensed veterinary facility do not require local government approval, veterinarians who offer low cost rabies vaccinations through their hospitals on a routine or periodic basis are encouraged to contact their local health department to share the details of this service.

Rabies clinics held outside of a licensed veterinary facility are governed by Section 3.2-6521 of the *Code of Virginia* and must be approved by the locality. Specifically, this section of the Code reads, in part: “All rabies clinics require the approval by the appropriate local health department and governing body.” It is important to remember that the Board of Veterinary Medicine (BVM) may find veterinarians who participate in clinics that have not been approved by the locality to be out of compliance with the laws and regulations governing the practice of veterinary medicine in Virginia. In addition, both the veterinarian’s responsibility and the number of clinics a locality is to ensure are also addressed. More specifically, this section goes on to read “The licensed veterinarian who administers rabies vaccinations at the clinic shall (i) provide the owner or custodian a rabies vaccination certificate for each vaccinated animal and (ii) ensure that a licensed veterinary facility retains a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate. The sponsoring organization of a rabies clinic shall, upon the request of the owner or custodian, an animal control officer, a humane investigator, a law-enforcement officer, a State Veterinarian’s representative, a licensed veterinarian, or an official of the Department of Health, provide the name and contact information of the licensed veterinary facility where a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate is retained. However, the county or city shall ensure that a clinic is conducted to serve its jurisdiction at least once every two years.”

Per the BVM, the *Regulations Governing the Practice of Veterinary Medicine*, 18VAC150-20-195(A) requires a daily record for each patient treated. A copy of the rabies certificate constitutes the patient record and must be maintained by the treating veterinarian. In addition, a copy of the rabies certificates or the relevant information reflecting dogs vaccinated at such a clinic should be submitted to the treasurer of the locality in which the vaccination occurs. This requirement is detailed in the *Code of Virginia*, Section 3.2-6529 entitled “Veterinarians to provide treasurer with rabies certificate information; civil penalty.” While fulfilling this requirement may be facilitated by the organization sponsoring the clinic, it is important to remember that, as

articulated in the aforementioned section of the *Code*, the ultimate responsibility for certificate submission lies with the attending veterinarian.

For questions about rabies clinics in your locality, please contact your local health department. A directory of local health departments can be found at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/LHD/index.htm>.

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