

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive  
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health  
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

**CONTACT: SUSAN TOLCHIN**  
**MARY LANDRIGAN**

**(914) 995-2932**  
**(914) 813-5013**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HEALTH DEPARTMENT ALERTS RESIDENTS AFTER BRONX KITTEN  
TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES**

The Westchester County Department of Health has received notification from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene that a kitten from a 99-cent Discount Store located at 1714 University Avenue in the Morris Heights Section of the Bronx has tested positive for rabies. Any Westchester residents who may have come into contact with kittens from this store should contact the Westchester County Department of Health immediately at (914) 813-5000.

The 99-Cent Discount Store closed on October 18 and is no longer in business. Other kittens from this litter should be considered at high risk for rabies and anyone who may have come into contact with kittens at this location since September of 2002 should also contact the Health Department at (914) 813-5000 to assess their need for life-saving rabies treatment.

Westchester County Commissioner of Health Dr. Joshua Lipsman warns that anyone bitten by a rabid animal or having contact with its saliva may need to receive immediate post-exposure rabies treatment. "When administered early enough, before rabies symptoms develop, the treatment is 100% effective," he said. "However, once symptoms occur, in humans or animals, the disease is fatal," he added.

"It is also imperative for pet owners to immunize their animals against rabies and to ensure that these vaccinations are kept up to date," continued Dr. Lipsman. "Previously vaccinated domestic animals such as dogs, cats, and ferrets, require a booster vaccination within five days of exposure to a rabid animal. Such incidents must be immediately reported to the health department."

**MORE**

## **RABID KITTEN P. 2**

A change in an animal's behavior is the first sign of rabies. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. It may lose fear of people and become excited and irritable, or, may appear particularly friendly and affectionate. Staggering, spitting, and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted. Adults should encourage children to immediately tell an adult if an animal has bitten them and to refrain from touching unfamiliar animals.

All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000, 24 hours a day. For more information about rabies and its prevention, residents can also call the RABIES HOTLINE at (914) 813-5010 or visit the Health Department's Website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

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