



Rick Scott  
Governor

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February 3, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to inform you of important changes to our Rabies Post Exposure Protocol that will become effective March 1, 2011.

The Pinellas County Health Department will no longer serve as the repository for Rabies Vaccine; therefore we will no longer be able to provide Rabies Vaccine or Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG) to private providers. Providers who wish to offer the vaccine to their patients will need to order it directly from the manufacturer. Orders are usually received within 24 hours so there will not be a need for providers to keep the vaccine in stock.

Victims of animal bites may be referred to hospital Emergency Departments (ED) for initial medical evaluation, wound infiltration and initiation of the rabies post-exposure vaccine series when indicated. Following the initial treatment at the ED, patients may be referred to the Pinellas County Health Department to complete the rabies post-exposure prophylaxis series.

We have informed hospitals and Emergency Departments in Pinellas County of the need for them to maintain a sufficient supply of HRIG and Rabies Vaccine on hand. Both HRIG and Rabies Vaccine are readily available for next day drop shipment to hospital pharmacies directly from the manufacturer. The Pinellas County Health Department will maintain a small supply of HRIG and vaccine for emergencies.

These changes will make it possible to comply with pharmaceutical dispensing guidelines and offer the best medical care to patients as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Pinellas County Health Department can be contacted as needed for consultation at (727) 824-6932 when persons present to the emergency department with a history of an animal bite or scratch or other significant exposure, e.g. mucous membrane or wound exposure through the saliva of the animal. Pinellas County Animal Services should be notified of all animal bites by contacting (727) 582-2608.

For further information on rabies treatment and reporting forms, please see the attached information package.

Please contact the Pinellas County Health Department with any questions. Thank you for your assistance with this very important public health matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claude M. Dharamraj".

Claude M. Dharamraj, MD, MPH, FAAP  
Director

CMD/pr