

**[ BAI JOINT DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE  
ORDER NO. 01, March 10, 2008 ]**

**GUIDELINES FOR DECLARING AREAS AS RABIES-FREE ZONES**

**I. BACKGROUND/RATIONALE**

Rabies is a fatal disease in developing countries where animal rabies immunization, prevention and control of dogs are inadequate. More than half of the estimated global number of Human Rabies deaths occurs in Asia and most commonly human rabies deaths are caused by dog bites.

The Philippines ranks among the top ten countries worldwide with the highest incidence of Human Rabies deaths. The annual mortality rate from rabies is 5-8 per million population thus, approximately 300-500 Filipinos die of rabies every year or one person per day- Human and animal rabies is region wide in distribution. In 2005, the top 4 regions with the number human rabies deaths are Region VI (39), Region III (35), Region V (30) and Region VII (27). Of the 100,000 animal bite victims, 69% involve are children below 15 years old.

In 2005, the animal rabies incidence was calculated at 17-5 per 100,000 dog population and the regions with high incidence of animal rabies are Region VI (253), Region III (249), Region X (154), NCR (153), Region I (142), Region IV (122) and Region VII (69).

To facilitate achievement of the goals and objectives, the DA, DOH and other key partners shall embark on zonal/island declaration of Rabies-Free areas. The prevention of human rabies shall be sustained, focusing on community efforts involving both veterinary and public health workers.

This Order is hereby established to provide the guidelines for declaring zones/areas as Rabies-Free by which the DA, DOH and other concerned institutions and agencies that will administer programs and activities on the control, prevention and elimination of Rabies through effective management and better coordination among key stakeholders at the national and local levels.

**II.**

**DECLARATION OF POLICIES**

These operational guidelines shall be guided by the following legal mandates and policies:

A. Republic Act 9482 or the Anti-Rabies Act of 2007 -An Act Providing for the Control and Elimination of Human and Animal Rabies, Prescribing penalties for Violation Thereof and Appropriating Funds Therefor.

B. Memorandum of Agreement entered into by the Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture, Health, Education, Culture and Sport and the Interior and Local Government on May 8, 1991.

C. Executive Order No. 84 - Declaring March as the Rabies Awareness Month, Rationalizing the Control Measures for the Prevention and Eradication of Rabies and Appropriating Funds Thereof.

D. Batas Pambansa Blg. 97-An Act Providing for the Compulsory Immunization of Live stock, Poultry, and Other Animals Against Dangerous Communicable Diseases.

E. WHO Technical Report Series 931 (WHO Expert Consultation on Rabies) - 9. Rabies- Free and rabies-free countries or areas.

F. DOH Administrative Order No. 2005-0023 (Implementing Guidelines for Formula One for health as framework for Health Reforms) C2. c.i. undertake Disease-Free Zone initiative - "Areas where diseases such as malaria, filariasis, schistosomiasis, rabies, leprosy and vaccine-preventable diseases are major health problems shall be targeted for initiative campaigns to eliminate these diseases as public threats."

G. DOH Administrative Order 2007-0036 (Guidelines on the Philippines Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (PIDSR) Framework) VIII.A. 1.b.1. Immediately notifiable diseases/syndrome or event (i.Rabies)

### III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Goal: To declare Philippines as a Rabies-Free Country by 2020

B. General Objectives:

1. To declare provinces, cities, municipalities and islands as rabies-free zones.
2. To maintain and sustain the rabies-free status of the provinces, cities, municipalities and islands declared as rabies-free zones.

C Specific Objectives:

1. To identify provinces, cities, municipalities and islands eligible for declaration as rabies free zones.
2. To provide technical and logistic assistance to Local Government Units (LGUs) on how to attain/achieve and maintain the Rabies-Free Zone/Area status.
3. To validate and confirm the rabies-free status of eligible provinces, cities, municipalities and islands, base on the criteria set by the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Animal Industry.

### IV. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This issuance shall apply to all sectors, to include public and private, National

Government Agencies (NGAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), local and international Non-Government Organization (NGOs) and People's Organizations (POs) and the community involve in the prevention, control and elimination of human and animal rabies.

## V.

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Animal birth control - shall refer to the methods to manage animal populations through; reproductive control measures such as neutering;

B. Dog ecology - shall refer to the study of the relation of dogs to the environment, human population and to each other, including the population density and behavior;

C. Impounding - refers to the process of capturing and confining stray animals;

D. Rabies-Free Zone/Area - refers to area with no confirmed human or animal rabies case, ding bats, or indigenously acquired infection by a lyssavirus at any time during the previous two years in the presence of an adequate surveillance system and import policy and have satisfied all criteria for a rabies-free zone/area declaration;

E. Provisional Rabies-Free Zone/Area - refers to area that is historically free of rabies where an adequate rabies surveillance is in place to confirm the rabies-free status, an effective import policy have been put into place to ensure maintenance of the rabies free status and has failed to meet the other requirements for the declaration of a rabies-free area/zone.

F. National Rabies Prevention and Control Program refers to the program with the ultimate objective of controlling Rabies in the country implemented by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Health (DOH) in collaboration with the Department of Education, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), People's Organizations (POs) and the academe;

G. Veterinary groups-refers to animal health practitioners responsible for the health and welfare of animals;

H. Dog Bite- refers to an act by which a dog seizes, cuts and grips with its teeth its victim so that the skin of the victim has been wounded, pierced and scratched;

I. Responsible Pet Ownership - refers to giving proper care to pets by providing vaccinations against rabies at 3 months of age and every year thereafter; providing clean, comfortable and proper shelter; providing enough exercise, care and proper nutrition, keeping pets within their own backyard where they are free from contact with infected dogs and keeping them on leash when taken for a walk; and bringing the pet for regular health consultation with the veterinarian.

## VI.

### IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES ON DECLARING AREAS/ZONES AS RABIES-FREE

#### A. GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1. Rabies is a notifiable disease and as such shall be the responsibility of the local government units to report human and animal rabies cases promptly.
2. The Office International de Epizooties (OIE) (World Organization for Animal Health) and the World Health Organization requires that no indigenous acquired rabies infection has been confirmed in man and any animal species during the past two (2) years.
3. An effective system of disease surveillance for humans and animal rabies has been set up and well implemented in the province/city/municipality.
4. All regulatory measures for the prevention and control of rabies have been implemented including shipping/transport procedures.
5. Accessibility of post-exposure treatment using modern cell culture vaccines approved and recommended for both intradermal and intramuscular use.
6. Established mechanism to ensure availability of Human Anti-Rabies Vaccines and Rabies Immunoglobulins such schemes as inter-local health financing or cost sharing (public-private mix, patient pet-owner).
7. Regular health education and advocacy activities on Rabies Prevention and Control to include Elementary School Curriculum Integration and Instruction on the prevention and control of rabies.

#### B GENERAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE DECLARATION OF RABIES-FREE ZONE/AREA:

1. Local ordinance on the prevention and control of rabies.
2. Localized comprehensive Rabies Prevention/Control and Elimination Program.
3. Animal Rabies:
  - a. No case of indigenously acquired infection by a type 1 lyssavirus confirmed in any animal species including bats at anytime during the previous two (2) years through monthly zero-case reporting from the Municipal Agriculture Office/Veterinary Office and monthly reporting of laboratory confirmed cases by all veterinary rabies laboratory- Philippine Animal Health Center (PAHC), Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), 10 Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratories (RADDLs), and 2 accredited provincial rabies labs.
  - b. Existing comprehensive rabies vaccination program in place for 2 years as per provisions of the Anti-Rabies Act of 2007.
  - c. Adequate laboratory-based surveillance system is in full operation in Rabies-Free and Provisionally Rabies-Free areas. The system should include the following:
    - i. Functional Rabies laboratories performing Fluorescent Antibody Test (FAT) for Rabies diagnosis in a minimum of 0.02% of the estimated dog population in, their designated catchment areas/zones per year;