



Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Immunization in Manitoba is a publicly funded program through Manitoba Health, for high risk, eligible groups (including students completing post-secondary practicums in these fields) at no cost to them. These groups include:

- veterinarians, veterinarian assistants and vet technicians
- animal health technologists/veterinary technologists
- taxidermists, trappers, spelunkers
- individuals working with injured wildlife
- conservation officers, park rangers, animal control officers
- laboratory and field personnel working with rabies
- zoologists or other individuals working in rabies endemic countries

The **Rabies Occupational Health Services Program coordinated through the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) Travel Health & Tropical Medicine Services** has been in operation since the summer of 2013 and is intended for clients of Winnipeg (and for those previously enrolled in the former Rabies PEP Immunization Program from surrounding communities, such as Arborg, Beausejour, Gimli, Oakbank, Oakbluff, Selkirk, St Francis Xavier, Steinbach, Stonewall etc.). This list is not exhaustive. Individuals who are eligible for occupational rabies vaccine, and not living or working in Winnipeg or surrounding communities, are to contact their local public health office or their health care provider to obtain rabies PrEP services (i.e.; serology testing, rabies booster doses, and/or rabies primary immunization as needed).

The WRHA Rabies Occupational Health Services Program differs from historical programs in Manitoba, with letter-based and appointment services now being offered centrally at the WRHA Travel Health & Tropical Medicine Services Clinic, located at 490 Hargrave Street in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

### **What can eligible individuals expect from the WRHA Rabies Occupational Health Services Program?**

#### **For those needing serology testing:**

- Notification by way of letter, of the need for rabies serology, will be completed every 2 years and individuals will be advised to have their blood drawn for rabies titres at a laboratory that is convenient to them. A lab requisition identifying the serology test that is to be performed, will accompany the letter.
- Serology results will arrive at our clinic within 3 to 6 weeks, be reviewed by our public health staff, and a letter will be generated & mailed, notifying the individual of their current results and follow-up plan:
  - If their results confirm protective immunity, a reminder letter will be diarized and sent out in 2 years' time, for repeat serology
  - If their results show that the antibody levels have fallen below the acceptable protective range, the individual will be asked to contact our clinic to make an appointment for a booster dose of rabies vaccine, followed by repeat serology in 2 weeks. Results will once again be shared by letter.



### **For those who need primary rabies PEP immunization:**

- Individuals will be informed by letter, of the need to make an appointment at our clinic to receive the intradermal (ID) rabies vaccination series
- Upon completion of the series, a lab requisition will be provided to the individual for post immunization serology that is to be completed 2 weeks following the last dose of the series
- Serology results will arrive at our clinic within 3 to 6 weeks, be reviewed by our public health staff, and a letter will be generated & mailed, notifying the individual of their current results and follow-up plan:
  - If their results confirm protective immunity, a reminder letter will be diarized and sent out in 2 years' time, for repeat serology.
  - If their results do not confirm protective immunity, the individual will be asked to contact our clinic to make an appointment for a booster dose of rabies vaccine, followed by repeat serology in 2 weeks. Results will once again be shared by letter.

All immunizations provided at our clinic will be documented in the Provincial Immunization Registry.

### **\*\*Next Steps for Clinic Managers:**

- 1) Organizations (i.e.; employers, veterinary offices, schools etc.) are asked to complete the attached spreadsheet for all of your eligible staff/students and to submit it to our clinic (if you have not done so already). Please identify for each staff/student:
  - Demographic information
  - Their work role
  - The need for primary rabies PrEP immunization series (i.e.; never received rabies vaccine before)
  - If previously immunized, along with dates if known and/or if due for serology
- 2) You should complete and submit this spreadsheet for all “new” staff/students on a regular basis, so they can also be enrolled into our program for immunization and/or ongoing serological monitoring.
- 3) Please send your completed staff list by fax (204-940-8409) to the attention of the WRHA Rabies Occupational Health Program.
- 4) Please remember to inform each of your staff members that you have submitted their information to our office, so they are aware we will be contacting them.

Please ensure to remind your staff that it is their and their employer's responsibility to ensure that they undergo necessary follow up and receive the rabies vaccinations and/or go for serology testing. Our program will do its utmost to provide the means as described above to assist your staff in adhering to their immunization program.

If you have any questions regarding the WRHA Rabies Occupational Health Services Program, please contact Jacque Shackel at [jshackel@wrha.mb.ca](mailto:jshackel@wrha.mb.ca)

If there are any further questions regarding the overall Manitoba Health Rabies Immunization Program, please contact Manitoba Health at 204-788-6737.

Manitoba Health has a general fact sheet on rabies at the following link (**Rabies Vaccine Fact Sheet:** <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/factsheets/rabies.pdf>) but currently does not have one specific to Occupational Rabies Immunization. Upon accessing WRHA services for immunization, a fact sheet on occupational rabies immunization will be provided.

