



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kent County Animal Shelter Urges Caution during Canine Flu Spread

GRAND RAPIDS – Many people are contacting the Kent County Animal Shelter with concerns about Canine Flu. The flu has been confirmed in 1200 dogs in 10 states, with two cases here in Kent County, according to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. This H3N2 virus can cause a fever, make dogs lethargic, and symptoms can last two weeks. While we haven't had any cases of illness at this time, we urge dog owners to take steps to protect dogs – most importantly, avoid contact with other dogs that might be carrying the virus. . “As a dog owner, I think it’s reasonable to be concerned.” says Chris Buckley, DVM, staff veterinarian at KCAS. “But it would be unreasonable to avoid dog parks, grooming, or boarding and daycare facilities at this time.” More information from the American Veterinary Medical Association can be found here. <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/FAQs/Pages/Control-of-Canine-Influenza-in-Dogs.aspx>

Use caution at dog parks, by making sure your dog doesn't play with a dog that looks tired or ill. Talk to your boarding facility to see what measures they have in place to safeguard pets from illness. “If your dog gets loose and has an updated tag, our Animal Control Officers can, in many cases, immediately return the dog to his or her home,” said Carly Luttmann, Kent County Animal Shelter Supervisor. “If the dog must be brought into the shelter, we vaccinate immediately for other illnesses, but there is no vaccination from canine flu. We know viruses can quickly spread. Make sure your dog is licensed to avoid a trip here.”

A dog license helps to get your dog home safe if they become lost. Dog licensing provides funding for animal control in Kent County. This allows us to investigate and prosecute animal cruelty and neglect, as well as responding to loose or aggressive dogs. It's the responsible thing to do. Licensing protects our community by ensuring dogs are vaccinated against rabies. Michigan law requires that all dogs over the age of four (4) months are licensed and all new dogs are licensed within 30 days.

Numerous veterinarians are offering One-Stop Vaccinations and Licensing. You must contact the veterinarian's office directly for pricing and to make an appointment. Many township and city offices provide licensing, as well as the Kent County Animal Shelter, Humane Society of West Michigan, C-Snip, or online. For more information on licensing locations, pricing, or to buy your dog's license online, go to www.accesskent.com/KCAS.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.