



Community Cat Programs Help Protect Public Health

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr Sandra Norman; I am the director of Companion Animal/Equine at the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH). Part of BOAH's responsibilities under state law is to administer the rabies vaccination administrative code 345 IAC 1-5-1.

Community cat programs are designed to create safer communities and promote public health by reducing the number of unvaccinated, unsterilized cats. These programs have experienced tremendous results when implemented including improved animal welfare, taxpayer savings and community member satisfaction, as animal nuisance behaviors are mostly eliminated when animals are sterilized. Trapping and euthanizing feral cats is a far more expensive effort and does not decrease the population over time.

Community cat programs also vaccinate all the cats for rabies. This is an admirable effort to protect the human population. These cats are not "owned"; therefore, their vaccination cannot be attributed to an owner. The state cannot require unowned animals to be vaccinated. Since the primary source of rabies is wildlife based, by vaccinating our community's feral cats who have the higher potential to contact wildlife we add a formidable barrier to our public health efforts to shield the human population from rabies infection. Vaccines of one to three-year duration are available to us and provide protection for both our animal friends and the public health. Revaccination is difficult to attain in this population but revaccinating tipped cats as we encounter them keeps immunity present. By spaying and neutering, we can reduce the number of feral cats and decrease their chance of exposure to wildlife as well as their nuisance behavior. This serves our public health as well as the animals we share our environment with daily.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sandra K.L. Norman".

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