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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**HOUSE BILL**

**No. 1700** Session of  
1983

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INTRODUCED BY PUNT, COY, MORRIS, DIETZ, GEIST, NOYE, BOWSER,  
PETRARCA, HALUSKA, BROUJOS, SEMMEL, DEAL, KOSINSKI, ITKIN,  
FISCHER, ARTY, COLAFELLA, JOHNSON, DeLUCA, ZWIKL, KASUNIC,  
BOOK, MADIGAN AND STAIRS, NOVEMBER 16, 1983

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE, NOVEMBER 16, 1983

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AN ACT

1 Providing for the control of rabies; granting powers and  
2 imposing duties on the Department of Health; requiring rabies  
3 vaccinations; providing for preexposure immunization;  
4 imposing a penalty; and making a repeal.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Rabies Law.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Department." The Department of Health.

14 "Rabies." In man and animal, hydrophobia, an acute viral  
15 disease of the central nervous system usually transmitted to man  
16 through the injection of saliva by an animal bite.

17 Section 3. Statewide system for rabies control and treatment.

18 The department shall provide for a Statewide system for the

1 general control of rabies, the treatment of persons exposed or  
2 suspected to have been exposed to rabies and the distribution of  
3 biological products necessary for the prevention and treatment  
4 of rabies.

5 Section 4. Immunization and treatment.

6 The department shall provide preexposure immunization,  
7 without charge, to any person determined by it to have a high  
8 risk of exposure to rabies infection. The department shall also  
9 bear the cost of the rabies treatment for any bite victim who  
10 requires this treatment, but is unable to pay the usual charges.

11 Section 5. Report of possible infection; penalty.

12 (a) Report required.--In any county where any dog, cat or  
13 other warm-blooded animal subject to rabies has bitten,  
14 scratched or exposed any person to a possible rabies infection,  
15 or when any animal is suspected of having rabies, it shall be  
16 the duty of any person having knowledge of these facts to report  
17 them immediately by telephone or in person to the local police  
18 department. Upon receipt of this report, the police personnel  
19 shall notify the local health officer and shall enforce all  
20 orders of the local health officer and regulations promulgated  
21 under this act.

22 (b) Testing and quarantine.--All testing, quarantine and  
23 other necessary or appropriate rabies control procedures  
24 appropriate to protect human life and safety shall be in  
25 accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the  
26 department.

27 (c) Penalty.--Any person refusing or failing to comply with  
28 the provisions of this section or with the orders or directives  
29 of the county health officer commits a misdemeanor and shall,  
30 upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than

1 \$500 for each offense.

2 Section 6. Vaccination of dog required; certificate.

3 (a) Requirement.--Every person owning or keeping a dog over  
4 four months of age in this Commonwealth shall cause that dog to  
5 be vaccinated against rabies. On or before January 1 of each  
6 year, every person owning or keeping a dog in this Commonwealth  
7 shall present to the county treasurer proof acceptable to the  
8 department that the dog has been adequately vaccinated against  
9 rabies. The Commonwealth shall recognize the three year rabies  
10 vaccine. The county treasurer shall not license any dog without  
11 proof of vaccination.

12 (b) Certificate of vaccination.--Every licensed veterinarian  
13 who vaccinates a dog or cat against rabies shall issue a  
14 vaccination certificate to the owner. Information contained in  
15 rabies vaccination records shall not be used for the purpose of  
16 licensing animals or for taxation of individuals for owning  
17 animals. The department shall prepare a standard vaccination  
18 certificate for this purpose and shall provide certificates free  
19 of charge to licensed veterinarians for their use. For the  
20 purposes of this section, each licensed veterinarian may select  
21 a vaccine of his choice and use the procedures for administering  
22 it as are consistent with the recommendations of the Federal  
23 agency which licenses the vaccine.

24 Section 7. Antirabies clinics.

25 In conjunction with the respective county health departments,  
26 the department shall provide for the establishment of low-cost,  
27 self-financing antirabies clinics in each county. These clinics  
28 shall be offered annually prior to each July 1 at locations and  
29 on dates as the department and the respective county health  
30 departments shall determine. The public health veterinarian

1 shall establish vaccination procedures to be used at the  
2 clinics. The county health department may charge such fees as  
3 may be required to cover its costs for material and service  
4 provided.

5 Section 8. Rules and regulations.

6 The department shall promulgate rules and regulations to  
7 carry out the provisions of this act.

8 Section 9. General repealer.

9 All acts and parts of acts are repealed insofar as they are  
10 inconsistent with this act.

11 Section 10. Effective date.

12 This act shall take effect in 60 days.