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Office of the Secretary-Treasurer
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, Inc.
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2007/08 Executive Board

July 2, 2008

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TO: National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne, & Enteric Diseases (ZVED), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30333 USA

The American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), comprising over 1500 members, had an item from CDC News and Highlights: "Temporary unavailability of rabies pre-exposure vaccination, Posted: May 20th, 2008" brought to our attention. We were notified of this unfortunate situation through a member several days after the original posting, rather than by direct notification to the AAVLD.

Although not formally addressed in the above notification, we wish to bring to your attention the fact that workers in veterinary diagnostic laboratories form an important constituency for rabies pre-exposure vaccination. A large number of our 1500 AAVLD members are at potential risk of exposure to rabies virus in our *post-mortem* rooms and through various diagnostic laboratory activities involving mammalian specimens. Diagnostic laboratory staff who are at risk of exposure routinely receive pre-exposure vaccination, followed typically by annual titer checks, with re-vaccination when titers fall below protective levels. Veterinary diagnostic laboratories deal routinely with carcasses, tissues, and specimens of unknown rabies status, and although we operate under strict quality and safety programs and procedures, accidental exposure is a recognized possibility in our laboratories. Pre-exposure vaccination of all new employees as well as re-vaccination of current employees are not only of great importance to us but are required for the majority of personnel in our laboratories.

As many of us are daily in direct contact with fresh nervous tissue and may perform rabies examinations, we feel the relevant information should have been communicated to our constituency in a more direct and timely manner. The AAVLD is very willing to help forward relevant biosafety and security information through our

network of communication, and would very much appreciate if your notifications would include the AAVLD. We would also like to offer the expertise within the AAVLD, should you have need of input on issues relevant to the veterinary diagnostic community. Is there a mechanism by which the AAVLD can formally request that relevant time-sensitive information be provided to the AAVLD membership by forwarding the item to our Secretary-Treasurer's office email vgarrison@ucdavis.edu or phone number 530-754-9719?

Respectfully,

AAVLD Executive Committee



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