

HEALTH

ALERT

To: Veterinarian Partners
From: Todd M. Kisner, MPH - Director of the Center for Health Protection
Date: 20 January 2017
RE: **Seoul Virus**

The Health Department would like to bring to the attention of our Community Veterinarian Partners the existence of six cases of Seoul virus in individuals who had direct exposure to rats in two different Illinois ratteries as reported by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Ratteries are facilities where rats are bred. At this time, no cases of Seoul Virus have been identified in Winnebago County.

Seoul virus, a type of hantavirus, is carried only by brown or Norway rats. Other pets and animals cannot be infected. Hantaviruses are a large group of viruses, carried in rodents and insectivores worldwide, which can cause disease in people who become accidental hosts.

Veterinarians may receive calls from residents with a rat contact who have read social media postings or have seen media coverage and are concerned. **If you receive calls from concerned rat owners, please have the individual(s) contact the Health Department directly at (815) 720-4050.**

Seoul virus is transmitted to people from direct contact with rat urine or feces, contaminated materials like bedding, and possibly by aerosolized feces, urine, or saliva. It can also be transmitted through a bite from an infected rat.

Symptoms of Seoul virus in people typically develop within 1 to 2 weeks after exposure, but it can take up to 8 weeks for symptoms to develop. Symptoms include:

- Intense headache
- Back and abdominal pain
- Fever
- Blurred vision
- Rash

Please share this information with your staff and colleagues.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Health Department at (815) 720-4050.