



County of San Diego

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WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

July 1, 2016

Pat Wright
4515 Panorama Drive
La Mesa, CA 91941

Dear Mr. Wright,

I am responding to your request for public records to County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency Community Epidemiology Branch regarding an incident involving "a ferret that bit someone on April 30th in Balboa Park."

County staff has conducted a diligent search and has determined that there are documents responsive to your request. Such responsive documents are attached. There are some documents, however, that are exempt from disclosure pursuant Government Code section 6254 (c) and (k). Accordingly, these documents are being withheld. Section 6254(c) provides that "...[p]ersonnel, medical, or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy" are exempt from disclosure. Section 6254 (k) provides that "[r]ecords, the disclosure of which is exempted or prohibited pursuant to federal or state law, including, but not limited to, provisions of the Evidence Code relating to privilege" are exempt from disclosure. The specific provisions of state and federal law that apply here are Civil Code section 56.10 *et seq.*, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and California Code of Regulations Title 17 Section 2502.

If you have any questions related to this response to your request, please contact me at eric.mcdonald@sdcounty.ca.gov or at 619-692-8436.

Sincerely,

Eric C. McDonald, MD, MPH
Medical Director
Epidemiology & Immunization Services Branch

ECM:

Enclosures: Two Pages

Hopkins, Jackie

From: Fritz, Curtis (CDPH-CID-DCDC-IDB) <Curtis.Fritz@cdph.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2016 10:57 AM
To: Hopkins, Jackie
Cc: Clifford, Deana@Wildlife; Vicknair, Michael@Wildlife
Subject: RE: Bite incident, ferret - Balboa Park, SD County Apr 30th

Good morning, Jackie.

Please see below a report from Dr. Clifford at California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regarding a ferret bite that occurred in San Diego County. Although possession of ferrets is subject to regulation/restriction by CDFW, bites from such animals should be handled in the same manner as bites from dogs and cats. Both the national and California Compendia of Rabies Control recommend that any ferret that bites a person be either a) confiscated and placed into a 10-day isolation/observation, or b) euthanized and tested. As the reported bite occurred in late April, it is sufficient at this point to verify that the biting animal remains alive and healthy. However, this may be difficult given that the Individual is reported to possess multiple animals (and the actual guilty ferret may be difficult to single out) and he has demonstrated a strong aversion to cooperating with CDFW, animal control, and others. Finally, his practice of potentiating these kinds of bite incidents by displaying his ferrets in public is a separate public health concern that may demand additional attention.

CDFW Officer Vicknair has additional information on the parties involved. Please call me if you have any questions or wish to further discuss appropriate actions.

Thanks much.

Curtis

Curtis L. Fritz, DVM, MPVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVPM (Epidemiology)
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From: Clifford, Deana@Wildlife
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2016 10:40 AM
To: Fritz, Curtis (CDPH-CID-DCDC-IDB); Vicknair, Michael@Wildlife
Subject: Bite incident, ferret - Balboa Park, SD County Apr 30th
Importance: High

Hi Curtis – thanks for taking my call today. I have cc'd CDFW Wildlife Officer Mike Vicknair who responded to the complaint from the bite victim.

On April 30th a person was bit by a ferret owned by a man in Balboa Park. It is our understanding the bite was not reported immediately but that the victim did seek medical attention. We do not know the vaccination status of this ferret.

Just before the holiday, this Incident was reported to Officer Vicknair.

Office Vicknair contacted Animal Services (county?) as he had received assistance from them in a previous ferret bite case a few years ago. That case involved the same responsible party. This gentleman is known to bring ferrets into public places as he is a proponent of legalization of ferret possession in California.

Mike can elaborate, but he did not receive any offer of assistance from Animal Services for this incident and thus called me.

Given that this is a bite incident, and the owner's pet ferrets have been responsible for a previous bite incident, I figured public health might want to engage on this issue to determine rabies risk to the bite victim and if any additional actions are needed for public health protection given this is the second incident associated with the same ferret owner.

Officer Vicknair's contact number is: 619-871-2753

Thanks for any assistance you can offer.

Sincerely – Deana

Deana Clifford DVM, MPVM, PhD
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