



Attention Administrators, Faculty, and Nurses!

The Texas Department of State Health Services would like to invite the students at your school to participate in a Rabies Awareness & Prevention Poster Contest. Rabies is a viral disease that kills over 50,000 people every year around the world. Human deaths from rabies in the United States are very rare (*approximately one death per year, almost exclusively due to rabies associated with bats*). This is due to strict animal control laws, widespread pet vaccinations, and public health intervention in identified rabies-exposure cases. Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is 100% effective when administered properly. However, the treatment is very expensive and requires multiple shots over a period of time.

Skunks and bats are the most commonly affected species in Texas. Private residences and school grounds are the most common locations in Texas for exposure to rabid bats. Bat bites are not always noticeable and many people are unaware that exposure to bats poses a risk. Most of these rabies exposures are preventable through education. This is why we are encouraging school kids throughout Texas to become more aware about rabies and respecting bats and other wildlife from a distance. Students at your school can participate by entering a contest to design a poster promoting rabies awareness & prevention. There are prizes for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade, and artwork from top-ranking posters may be used for future state sponsored public health educational projects. Prizes are provided by the *Zach Jones Memorial Fund* www.zachjonesmemorial.org/.

Please forward this information to the teachers in your school and encourage them to involve their students. Provided online is an information sheet for students and a teacher instruction sheet with details and an entry form www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/rabies/information/contest/. The **deadline** for poster submission is **April 7, 2017**. If you are interested and need additional information, feel free to contact Ms. Bonny Mayes directly. Thank you!

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