



DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Emergency Order

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services has investigated illness in twelve Wisconsin residents with onsets of illness in May and June 2003 who have had recent contact with prairie dogs. Some of those prairie dogs have exhibited signs of illness. Human illness includes fever, cough, rash and swollen lymph nodes. Preliminary laboratory results indicate that the cause of the human illness is an orthopox virus that could be transmitted by prairie dogs.

In order to protect the health of Wisconsin residents and under authority granted under Chapter 254.51 Wis Stats, the DHFS is issuing this emergency order prohibiting the following with regard to prairie dogs received after April 1, 2003:

1. importation
2. sale or distribution
3. display or any other activity that could result in direct human contact.

These prohibitions also apply to any species of mammal that has come in contact with prairie dogs received since April 1, 2003.

These prohibitions will remain in effect until the role of prairie dogs in the transmission of this disease is clear and the Department has concluded that there is no longer a risk to humans from contact with prairie dogs.

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