MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
No._______

TO : TO ALL PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, CITY MAYORS, MUNICIPAL MAYORS, DILG REGIONAL DIRECTORS, THE ARMM REGIONAL GOVERNOR AND OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : STRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANTI-RABIES ACT OF 2007 (Republic Act 9482)

In furtherance of the policy of the State of protecting and promoting people’s right to health, Republic Act No. 9482 or The Anti-Rabies Act of 2007 was approved into law, urging the need of establishing a system of control, prevention, spread, and eventual eradication of human and animal rabies by the year 2011.

To further the aims of the law, the following are its physical requirements:

1) Formulation of Rabies Prevention and Control Program for adoption through an ordinance, to include activities, among others: a) dog mass vaccination; b) establishment and maintenance of pounding areas for stray and unvaccinated dogs; c) encouragement for responsible pet ownership; and d) establishment and maintenance of central database system for vaccinated and registered dogs;

2) Creation of corresponding Multi-Sectoral Committee to undertake such program;

3) Appointment of Veterinary Officer and the Creation of a Veterinary Office in every province and city, in conformity with the Local Government Code of 1991;

4) Adoption of an ordinance banning the consumption and trade of dog meat, providing for sanctions pursuant to Section 11 of the Act; and
5) Establishment and maintenance of a Dog Pound in every city and 1st class municipalities, for impounding of stray and unvaccinated dogs, provided however, that other adjoining municipalities may form themselves to establish and maintain a Dog Pound.

Towards this end, all Provincial Governors, City Mayors and Municipal Mayors, are hereby encouraged to strictly implement and adhere to the full intent of RA 9482, and guided by the following salient provisions of the law, to give emphasis on the prohibitions setforth in RA 9482, regarding the prohibition on the consumption and trade of dog meat:

**SEC. 5. (RA 9482) Responsibilities of Pet Owners.** - All Pet Owners shall be required to:

- Have their dog regularly vaccinated against rabies, and maintain registration card which shall contain all vaccinations conducted on their dog for accurate record purposes;
- Submit their dogs for mandatory registration;
- Maintain control over their dog and not allow it to roam the streets or any public place without a leash;
- Be a responsible owner by providing their dog with proper grooming adequate food and clean shelter;
- Within twenty-four (24) hours, report immediately any dog biting incident to the concerned officials for investigation or for any appropriate action and place such dog under observation by a government or private veterinarian; and
- Assist the dog bite victim immediately and shoulder the medical expenses incurred and other incidental expenses relative to the victim's injuries.

**SEC. 6. Responsibilities of Government Agencies.** - The following government agencies, which shall jointly implement the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program, shall be tasked to:

A. Department of Agriculture

- Improve and upgrade existing animal rabies laboratory diagnostic capabilities to ensure better services to the people;
- Ensure the availability and adequate supply of animal anti-rabies vaccines at all times.
- Undertake free anti-rabies vaccination of dogs giving priority to high risk depressed areas;
- Maintain and improve animal rabies surveillance system;
- Establish and maintain rabies free zone in coordination with the LGUs;
- Immediately facilitate for the approval of the sale and use of veterinary and human barbiturate drugs and veterinary euthanasia drugs by the Department of Health and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency;
- Strengthen the training of field personnel and the Information Education and Communication (IEC) activities on rabies prevention and control and responsible pet ownership;
- Conduct research on rabies and its control in coordination with other agencies;
- Formulate minimum standards and monitor the effective implementation of this Act; and
- Encourage collaborative activities with the DOH, DepEd, DILG, DENR, NGOs, POs and other concerned sectors.

B. Department of Health

- Ensure the availability and adequate supply of DOH pre-qualified human anti-rabies vaccine in animal bite treatment centers at all times and shall coordinate with other implementing agencies and concerned NGOs for this purpose;
- Provide Post-Exposure Treatment at the minimum expense to individuals bitten by animals suspected of being rabid which will consist of the initial vaccine and immunoglobulin dose;
- Provide Pre-Exposure Treatment to high-risk personnel, such as, but not limited to, laboratory staff, veterinarians, animal handlers, vaccinators and other persons working with rabies virus for free;
- Coordinate with the Department of Agriculture (DA) in the development of appropriate health education strategy to inform the public on rabies prevention and control, and responsible pet ownership;
- Develop and maintain a human Rabies surveillance system. Encourage collaborative activities with the DA, DepEd, DILG, DENR, NGOs, POs and other concerned sectors;
- Immediately approve the registration of veterinary and human barbiturate drugs and veterinary euthanasia drugs in coordination with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA).

C. Department of Education

- Strengthen rabies education program through school health teaching/curriculum;
- Assist in the dog mass immunization campaigns in the community;
- Encourage collaborative activities with the DA, DOH, DILG, DENR, NGOs, POs and other concerned sectors; and
Integrate proper information and education on responsible pet ownership in the relevant subjects in the elementary and high school levels.

**SEC. 7. Responsibilities of the LGUs.** - LGUs, in their respective localities, shall:

- Ensure that all dogs are properly immunized, registered and issued a corresponding dog tag for every immunized and registered dog;
- Strictly enforce dog impounding activities and field control to eliminate stray dogs;
- Ensure that dogs are leashed or confined within the premises of the owner's house or owner's fenced surroundings;
- Allocate funds to augment the implementation of the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program, particularly on the financing of supplies and human and dog vaccines needed for immunization;
- Ensure the enforcement of Section 6 of Republic Act No. 8485 or “The Animal Welfare Act of 1998”;
- Enact additional local ordinances that will support the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program that should include the regulation of treatment locally known as “tandok”;
- Adopt an ordinance providing for sanctions specified in Section 11 of the Act that prohibits the consumption and trade of dog meat;
- With respect to cities and first class municipalities, establish and maintain a Dog Pound where impounded dogs shall be kept, in accordance with Section 9 herein: Provided, That the other municipalities, shall, on their own, establish a Dog Pound or opt to share the expense of establishing and maintaining a Dog Pound with other adjoining municipalities, and/or with private animal shelters and control facilities;
- Prohibit the use of electrocution as a euthanasia procedure;
- Appoint a veterinarian and establish a veterinary office in every province and city: Provided, That the municipalities shall, on their own, opt to share the expense of having a veterinary office;
- Require pet shops to post information regarding rabies and responsible pet ownership;
- For purposes of ensuring the administrative feasibility of implementing the provisions of this Act and subject to paragraph 8 of this Section, the LGU shall collect the fines imposed under Section 11 sub-paragraphs (1), (3), (4), (5) and (6) of the law; and
- Any and all fines collected pursuant to this Act shall be used for the enhancement of the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program within the locality concerned, as well as the achievement of the objectives envisioned in this Act.
SEC. 8. Assistance of NGOs and the Academe. - The agencies tasked to implement the anti-rabies program shall seek the assistance and participation of NGOs in any of the following activities:

- Community mobilization;
- Health education/information dissemination on rabies and responsible pet ownership;
- Mass anti-rabies campaign;
- Promotion of the anti-rabies campaign during pet or any animal shows;
- Surveillance/reporting of rabies cases in animals and humans; and
- Any other activities geared towards the prevention and complete eradication of rabies.

SEC. 9. Impounding, Field Control and Disposition of Unregistered, Stray and Unvaccinated Dogs. - Unregistered, stray or unvaccinated dogs shall be put in Dog Pounds and disposed of, taking into consideration the following guidelines:

- Unregistered, stray or unvaccinated dogs shall be impounded and kept in the LGU’s designated Dog Pound;
- Impounded Dogs not claimed after three days from the Dog Pound shall be placed for adoption to qualified persons, with the assistance of an animal welfare NGO, when feasible, or otherwise disposed of in any manner authorized, subject to the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 8485, otherwise known as the “Animal Welfare Act of 1998”; and
- A fee shall be paid by owners of impounded dogs to the LGU concerned, pursuant to Section 7 hereof.

SEC. 10. Dog Population Control. - In furtherance of the policy of this Act to eradicate rabies, there is the need to control the dog population and minimize the number of unwanted stray dogs. As such, it is hereby mandated:

- That the DA, DOH, DILG, DepEd, LGUs, with the assistance of NGOs and POs shall undertake an educational and promotional campaign on responsible pet ownership, including the option of spaying or neutering their dogs;
- That the LGUs shall provide an incentive system whereby owners of dogs which have been spayed or neutered will be given a subsidized or discounted pet registration fee; and
- That dogs which have been impounded three times shall only be released after having been spayed or neutered, at the expense of the pet’s owner.
**SEC. 11. Penalties**

- Pet owners who fail or refuse to have their Dog registered and immunized against rabies shall be punished by a fine of Two Thousand (P2,000.00) Pesos;
- Pet owners who refuse to have their dog vaccinated against rabies shall be liable to pay for the vaccination of both the dog and the individuals bitten by their dog;
- Pet owners who refuse to have their dog put under observation after said dog has bitten an individual shall be meted a fine of Ten Thousand (P10,000.00) Pesos;
- Pet owners who refuse to have their dog put under observation and do not shoulder the medical expenses of the person bitten by their dog shall be meted a fine of Twenty-Five Thousand (P25,000.00) Pesos;
- Pet owners who refuse to put leash on their dogs when they are brought outside the house shall be meted a fine of Five Hundred (P500.00) Pesos for each incident;
- An impounded dog shall be released to the owner upon payment of a fine of not less than Five Hundred (P500.00) Pesos, but not more than One Thousand (P1,000.00) Pesos;
- Any person found guilty of trading dog for meat shall be fined not less than Five Thousand (P5,000.00) Pesos per dog, and subject to imprisonment of 1 to 4 years;
- Any person found guilty of using electrocution as a method of euthanasia shall be fined not less than Five Thousand (P5,000.00) Pesos per act, and subject to imprisonment of 1-4 years; and
- If the violation is committed by an alien, he or she shall be immediately deported after service of sentence without any further proceedings.

DILG Regional Director and Field Officers, and the ARMM Regional Governor shall ensure the widest dissemination of this Circular within their respective areas of assignments, and submit Quarterly Compliance Report by local government units, initial compliance update to reach the Office of the Secretary, through the Bureau of Local Government Supervision on or before October 15, 2010.

For strict compliance.

**JESSE M. ROBREDO**

Secretary