

1 **2021 NYSAC Legislative Conference**
2 **Standing Committee on Public Health/Mental Health**
3 **Resolution #2**

4 **Resolution in Support of Restoring State Funding to Local Health**
5 **Departments for Rabies Human Post-Exposure Prophylaxis**

6 **WHEREAS**, rabies is a deadly zoonotic disease, with a 99.9% fatality rate in humans if
7 left untreated; and

8 **WHEREAS**, rabies post-exposure prophylaxis should be authorized and provided as
9 soon as possible after exposure to an animal that is known to be rabid or is a high-
10 suspect for rabies; and

11 **WHEREAS**, New York State Public Health Law Section 2145 states that, “The
12 county health authority is responsible for the services and expenses necessary for the
13 suppression of human rabies;” and

14 **WHEREAS**, these activities include assuring that individuals exposed to rabies receive
15 treatment at no cost and providing mandatory quarterly free rabies clinics for cats,
16 dogs, and domesticated ferrets; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the 2021-22 executive budget proposal eliminates state funding that
18 supported costs for authorized rabies treatment not covered by third party insurance;
19 and

20 **WHEREAS**, rabies expenses can be unpredictable from year to year, based on the
21 number of exposures; and

22 **WHEREAS**, a single large exposure, such as at a children’s camp, or exposures in
23 populations with higher numbers of uninsured individuals can quickly exhaust local
24 budgets for rabies treatment; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the fatality risk of an untreated rabies exposure means that costs must be
26 covered to assure treatment; and

27 **WHEREAS**, third party insurers should be required to cover treatment for rabies
28 exposure; and

29 **WHEREAS**, current statute requires both county health authority and insurer
30 approval of treatment; and

31 **WHEREAS**, county health authority assessment and approval of post-exposure
32 treatment for rabies should suffice for insurers to reimburse for these expenses without
33 further approval; and

34 **WHEREAS**, hospital rates for treatment vary significantly, exceeding third party
35 reimbursement rates and placing the burden of the unreimbursed balance on both
36 individuals receiving treatment and localities.

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the New York State Association of
2 Counties (NYSAC) calls on the Governor and State Legislature to restore funding for
3 rabies program expenses to prior year levels; and

4 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Governor and Legislature enact reforms to
5 current public health law to reduce local and state taxpayer costs by increasing
6 maximization of third-party insurance payments for post exposure rabies treatment;
7 and

8 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Governor and Legislature enact reforms to
9 current public health law to require health care providers to accept rates for
10 reimbursement for rabies treatment set by the state Commissioner of Health; and

11 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be sent to the counties
12 of New York encouraging member counties to enact similar resolutions; and

13 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NYSAC shall forward copies of this resolution to
14 Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, the New York State Legislature and all others deemed
15 necessary and proper.