FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 4, 2012

Bat tests Positive for Rabies in Montgomery County, PA

Norristown, PA (June 4, 2012) – The Montgomery County Health Department received confirmation that a bat found at the Upper Merion Swim and Tennis Club in King Of Prussia, PA (Upper Merion Township) tested positive for rabies. The bat was submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Laboratories on June 1, 2012 and tested positive on June 2, 2012.

The bat is known to have injured two persons on May 29, 2012. Two human exposures to the bat have been identified and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) was recommended and initiated. Other persons may have been exposed. Montgomery County Health Department is working with the swim club and the township to inform the members, visitors, staff, and the community at large.

People often know when they have been bitten by a bat, but most types of bats have very small teeth which may leave marks that disappear quickly. Be safe and in these situations, try to safely capture the bat, have the bat tested, and seek medical advice immediately.

Since January of this year, the Montgomery County Health Department has received reports of 7 positive Animal Rabies cases in Montgomery County: 3 raccoons Salford Township (1), Perkiomen Township (1), and Towamencin Township (1), and 2 skunks Upper Merion Township (1) and Upper Moreland Township (1), and 2 bats Horsham Township (1) and now in Upper Merion Township (1).

All residents of Montgomery County, especially those where rabid animals have been found, should be warned not to befriend any wild or stray animals. Residents are requested to report any contact with stray or wild animals to the Montgomery County Health Department at (610) 278-5117.

Vaccinating domestic animals, e.g. dogs, cats, and ferrets, is an important way to prevent Rabies transmission from wildlife animal reservoirs to the human population. The Montgomery County Public Health Code requires that all cats and dogs three months of age and older must be vaccinated.
against Rabies. Persons with questions about vaccination for their pets are referred to contact their veterinarian.

To assist with rabies control, Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) will be conducting its annual Low-Cost Rabies Immunization Clinics on Saturdays in June for the twenty-first consecutive year. As in previous years, these clinics are located throughout the county in order to ensure that resident pet owners have access to this disease prevention service. For more information about these rabies clinics, please go to the MCHD website: www.health.montcopa.org

For more information on rabies and bats, please visit: http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/index.html.