



WISE OWL VETERINARY CARE

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This letter is addressed to the people of Guam, the government of the state of Hawaii, and the World Health Organization. The situation here in Guam is rather grave. The government sponsored, supported, and permissiveness that have allowed the present situation to get to this point is appalling, and an affront to the good people of Guam, and to world health.

I am talking about the rabies and quarantine situation in Guam. Presently, and for the past 10 years, Guam's only civilian quarantine center has been horribly deficient in even complying with building codes, never mind humane animal care. Numerous escapes from quarantine are now documented and more are coming to light. The government officials in charge of quarantine refuse to allow modern facilities to open. They steadfastly and openly declare that the existing quarantine must stay open despite its blatant failure to protect public health. They call things like escapes, failure to place animals in the quarantine facility (they are housed with sick animals at a local vet clinic), and broken down and missing fencing - just minor infractions. GovGuam has even failed to do yearly sanitation inspections since 2001. The government veterinarian has been employed by the civilian owner of the quarantine facility. The CDC indicates the most likely method of rabies entering a rabies free island, like Guam, would be a failure in the Quarantine system.

The Territorial Veterinarian, Dr. Thomas Poole, went so far as to write an article on quarantine in the local dog club magazine, *671 Bully Magazine*, (issue 3, April 2010).

Guam is very different from most rabies-free areas. We have a large stray and feral dog population on Guam, and we have jungles wherein they can disappear at will. Moreover, we are visited frequently by boats from areas where rabies is hyperenzootic - that is present in huge numbers. The Phillipines is the most worrisome example..... And that is why it remains important to vaccinate pets on Guam for Rabies.

Basically, Dr. Poole is admitting that we cannot control our borders. We cannot control the stray dog population. And we must vaccinate for rabies to prevent it because we cannot keep it out.

The problem is compounded by the fact that compliance with vaccination is very low. There is no legal need to vaccinate cats and cats carry rabies and transmit it in higher percentages than the dogs (again per CDC).

Guam cannot claim to be a safe place for the world in regards to rabies anymore. The government official in charge has even stated so in writing. It is time for Guam to once again loose its rabies free status. This will be good for the world and bad for Guam. However, it is up to Guam to repair the problem, for it was Guam that allowed it to happen

Joel Joseph DVM