



Charlie Crist  
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.  
State Surgeon General

## Information Update

Contact: Jennifer James-Mesloh  
Email: Jennifer\_James-Mesloh@doh.state.fl.us  
Phone: (239) 332-9561 - office  
Phone: (850) 519-5728 - cell

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Youth Seen in Photo With Rabid Bat Have Been Identified

*-Search for girl successful -*

**Fort Myers, FL** – The search to identify a young girl who was seen in a photo with a rabid bat on Ft. Myers Beach pier has been successful. Within minutes of sending out the information to media outlets, the Lee County Health Department was contacted identifying the young girl.

Earlier today several photos of kids playing with a rabid bat were forwarded to the Lee County Health Department from an Iowa health department. A vacationer from out-of-state anonymously notified their local health department, which in turn contacted the Lee County Health Department.

“We are extremely pleased that the young girl we were searching for has been identified and according to the girl’s parent did not have any physical contact with the bat” said Dr. Judith A. Hartner, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A., Director of the Lee County Health Department.

Also, three boys that were seen handling a rabid bat on Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> are still unidentified. Since rabies is a fatal disease, the Lee County Health Department is still trying to locate 3 remaining youth in order to administer rabies vaccinations.

On Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 4:00pm, an eyewitness saw some youth estimated to be between 10-12 years of age handling, playing and kissing a bat at the Ft. Myers Beach pier. Rabies is a fatal disease. There is no known cure for rabies, only vaccination. Therefore, it is critical that any youth who were playing with the bat on Ft. Myers Beach pier are vaccinated as soon as possible.

For those individuals that were visiting Ft. Myers Beach Pier in Florida on Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and have any information on how to contact the remaining youth seen handling a bat, please contact the Lee County Health Department at (239) 332-9501. The phone number will be operational 24-hours per day/ 7-days per week.

For more information concerning rabies and how it spreads please refer to the Florida Department of Health website: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/rabies/rabies-education.html> and at the Centers for Disease Control website: <http://www.cdc.gov/RABIES/bats.html> or <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/kidsrabies/>

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Judith A. Hartner, M.D., M.P.H. • Director  
3920 Michigan Avenue • Fort Myers, FL • 33916  
[www.leechd.com](http://www.leechd.com)

