



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Cny Horses Gain Protection From Deadly Eee

Patty Ritchie

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Half-dozen Oswego Horses Join Over 200 Protected Through Ritchie-sponsored Clinics

A half-dozen Oswego County horses can be added to the list of equines now protected from the deadly EEE virus, following last night's no-cost vaccination clinic sponsored in New Haven by State Senator Patty Ritchie.

More than 200 horses have now been vaccinated through the program, in which Senator Ritchie partnered with local veterinarians in Oswego and St. Lawrence County to safeguard horses from the virus that killed at least 11 horses in Central and Northern New York last summer.

"Oswego County knows how serious a disease EEE is," said Senator Ritchie. "And most horse owners have already taken steps to protect their horses with the only available vaccine against EEE."

"This clinic helped us reach even more horse owners, and continue the all-important mission of educating the public about the risk, and ways to protect themselves, their families and their animals."

New Haven was "Ground Zero" in last summer's EEE fight, which claimed the life of a local girl—the fifth human death from EEE in Oswego and Onondaga Counties over 40 years.

The event, held at the Town of New Haven Highway Department garage, was the second of two clinics hosted by the Senator. Veterinarian Dr. Reid Oliver of North Country Veterinary Services, with offices in Pulaski and Scriba, provided his services at no extra cost.

Paul Forestiere, executive director of Cooperative Extension of Oswego County was also on hand with staff and volunteers to help with the event, which was also attended by Oswego County Legislator Kevin Gardner, a leader in the county's EEE fight, New Haven Town Supervisor Russell Sturtz, Town Clerk Debra Allen, and Oswego County's Acting Public Health Director, Inga Back.

"I'd especially like to thank Dr. Oliver, who graciously provided his services at no extra cost to the horse owners who came to the clinic," said Senator Ritchie.

"Without Dr. Oliver's assistance we wouldn't have been able to provide this critical vaccine to these animals that are so vulnerable to EEE."

Thursday night in St. Lawrence County, nearly three dozen horses were vaccinated, and follow-up visits were arranged with more than 150 area farmers and horse owners who were unable to make it to the clinic.

EEE, or Eastern Equine Encephalitis, is a nearly always-fatal disease in horses and rarely affects humans. Last year, the disease claimed the life of 4-year old Maggie Sue Wilcox of New Haven.

Horse owners who participated in the clinic were given information on how to protect themselves and their families from EEE, by avoiding mosquitoes that spread the disease. [Click here to see the EEE prevention tips by Senator Ritchie and the state Department of Health.](#)

There is no human vaccine, but Senator Ritchie has sponsored bipartisan legislation in Albany to get New York State actively involved in finding one, and making it available as soon as possible.

The clinics were made possible with funding obtained by Senator Ritchie through the State Budget.