



2003-14

EXECUTIVE ORDER IN RESPONSE TO ORTHOPOX OUTBREAK

WHEREAS, Illinois State authorities, as well as the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Wisconsin State authorities, have determined that an indeterminate number of prairie dogs held by an exotic pet distributor in Illinois have been infected or may have been infected with an orthopox virus, which virus has been determined by the CDC to be monkeypox or a closely-related infectious agent;

WHEREAS, these prairie dogs have been held in close proximity with other animals of numerous species, some of which may be susceptible to infection with orthopox viruses, and these animals include Gambian rats which previously have been associated with transmission of orthopox viruses;

WHEREAS, a number of prairie dogs and other animals from the pet distributor in question have been transported in recent weeks to various other distributors, retailers and purchasers of exotic pets in Illinois and throughout the United States, through in-person sale transactions, pet swap events, internet sale transactions and other means;

WHEREAS, in recent days there have been 12 human illnesses in Wisconsin and 1 human illness in Illinois, in which the individuals have exhibited symptoms consistent with an orthopox virus;

WHEREAS, the CDC has conducted laboratory testing indicating that certain of these human cases have monkeypox or a closely-related infectious agent;

WHEREAS, there is reliable information that some of these individuals have had contact with prairie dogs from the exotic pet dealership in question;

WHEREAS, there previously have been no known human cases of monkeypox in the United States;

WHEREAS, monkeypox and other orthopox viruses are known to be contagious between and among certain animals and humans;

WHEREAS, monkeypox can cause serious human illness, and in some cases can be fatal; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate for the State of Illinois immediately to take measures to protect the public's health in response to this orthopox outbreak.

THEREFORE, by the powers vested in me as the Governor of the State of Illinois, I order the following:

1. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), in consultation with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, is directed immediately to:
 - (a) Develop and implement a plan for handling animals in Illinois who are or may have been infected with or exposed to the orthopox virus, such plan to include provisions, as appropriate, for the quarantine, isolation or other disposition of such animals, in order to protect public health; effective immediately, the following is prohibited in Illinois with respect to prairie dogs or Gambian rats until IDPH determines that the threat to the public health no longer exists: importation, sale or distribution, public display or any other activity that could result in unnecessary human contact.
 - (b) Develop and implement a plan for evaluating the presence of orthopox virus and related infectious material in facilities and equipment that has housed or is housing animals that are or may have been infected with or exposed to the orthopox virus, and to implement a plan for appropriate handling and disposition of such equipment and facilities.
2. IDPH is further directed immediately to undertake all necessary and appropriate epidemiological investigation and analysis, and other communicable disease precautions and measures as are appropriate to respond to this orthopox virus outbreak, in order to protect the public health.
3. All other state agencies, including without limitation the Illinois State Police, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, are directed to cooperate and assist in the implementation of this Executive Order.

This Executive Order is effective immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
Governor

Issued by the Governor: June 7, 2003
Filed with the Secretary of State: June 7, 2003