



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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Acting Health Commissioner

2025 Veterinary Advisory #9

Introducing Firstline: An Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) Resource for Veterinary Professionals

- The NYC Health Department has launched a new veterinary infection prevention and control (IPC) module on *Firstline*, a free clinical decision support tool.
- The module aims to close critical gaps in IPC in companion animal settings to prevent infections in animals and protect public health.
- National and local data indicate that veterinary professionals face substantial challenges implementing IPC and that IPC training tools are needed.

Please share with your colleagues in Veterinary Medicine and your staff.

November 18, 2025

The NYC Health Department is launching a new infection prevention and control (IPC) resource for veterinary professionals within the Firstline clinical support online tool. This free digital tool offers quick, reliable IPC guidance for companion animal veterinary settings.

IPC in Veterinary Settings

IPC is a professional specialty that aims to reduce infectious disease transmission in healthcare settings. Veterinary professionals routinely make IPC-related decisions, big and small, with implications for the health of their patients, animal owners, and their colleagues. In human healthcare, IPC is federally regulated and supported by national guidelines. IPC in veterinary medicine remains underdeveloped often without specific regulations and guidelines.

Veterinary facilities seldom have IPC-focused staff or dedicated resources to prevent and monitor for healthcare-acquired infections among patients and staff. A 2013 [Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine article](#) highlights that while veterinary professionals are aware of healthcare-acquired infection risks, many fail to routinely mitigate these risks. In 2024, the NYC Health Department conducted focus groups in which 90% of participating NYC veterinary professionals reported facing challenges with implementing IPC.

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria pose an additional and unique challenge since animals can be colonized with these organisms and show no clinical signs. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria [can spread silently](#) among colonized patients and can contaminate the environment, establishing potential reservoirs of resistant bacteria within a veterinary facility.

[Studies](#) and [feedback from veterinary practitioners](#) suggest that a scalable, easy-to-access, veterinary-specific training tool could improve IPC in veterinary settings.

Firstline: An IPC Resource for Veterinary Professionals

The NYC Health Department's veterinary IPC Firstline module is designed for veterinarians, veterinary students, veterinary technicians, animal care workers, clinic managers, and other veterinary professionals. The content is tailored for IPC in companion animal medical facilities, and was developed with input from human and veterinary IPC experts. The Firstline module offers information in four broad categories:

- Veterinary IPC Principles
- Applied IPC for Veterinary Practice
- Veterinary IPC by Disease & Agent
- NYC Health Department Veterinary Health Alerts & Advisories

Together, these resources equip veterinary professionals with accessible guidance to help minimize healthcare-acquired infections.

Get started with Firstline now:

- **Scan the QR code** to download Firstline on your **mobile device**. Tap 'Select Location,' choose '**NYC Health - Veterinary Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)**' from the list, and follow the onboarding instructions.
- Access the **web-based** version [here](#).



Scan QR Code to
Download Firstline



Whether hospitalizing an animal with an infectious disease, developing protocols for routine clinic hygiene, or educating staff on antimicrobial stewardship, the veterinary IPC Firstline module supports ongoing professional development and strengthens infection prevention efforts across companion animal veterinary settings. For additional information or support in using Firstline, contact ARprevention@health.nyc.gov or 347.396.2600.

Visit our webpage for information and resources for veterinarians: [Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases: Information for Providers](#)
If you do not receive these alerts via email and would like to be added to the distribution list, email zivdu@health.nyc.gov

Report animal diseases to the NYC Health Department:

- Online through a [secure web-based reporting platform](#)
- Call 347-396-2600
- Fax the [Animal Disease Case Report form](#) to 347-396-2753

Report upon suspicion: Anthrax, brucellosis, glanders, influenza (novel with pandemic potential), mpox, plague, Q fever, SARS, tularemia.

For rabies, call the Animal Bite Unit at 646-364-1799 to report suspect rabid animals or for assistance with pets exposed to rabies.

Report upon laboratory diagnosis: Arboviral encephalitides, carbapenem-resistant organisms, leptospirosis, psittacosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, salmonellosis, tuberculosis

Report within 24 hours any outbreak or suspected outbreak of any disease, condition, or syndrome, of known or unknown etiology, which may pose a danger to public health.