



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

April 28, 2014

COPY

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
20 South Main Street, Suite 10
Janesville, Wisconsin 510738

MAY 02 2014

Regarding: File Number 510738

Dear Representative Ryan:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Jeff Borchardt, regarding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) role in tracking, quantifying, and analyzing dog bite and dog attack data. CDC recognizes the seriousness of dog bites and attacks, and we sympathize with the families and friends of individuals who have been affected by this important public health issue. Please extend our heart-felt condolences to Mr. Borchardt and his family for the loss of his son.

CDC focuses on the science behind making people safe and works to ensure that all people have safe and healthy homes and places to play. Home and recreation-related injuries affect people of all ages—from infants to older adults—and account for about one-third of all injury-related emergency department visits. Preventing these unintentional injuries—including dog bites and attacks—is an important step toward ensuring that all Americans live in safe and healthy homes.

Mortality data from CDC's National Vital Statistics System, which are based on death certificates, can be used to track deaths involving dog attacks. In 2010, there were 38 persons killed by dogs. Unfortunately, specific dog breeds cannot be identified in this system. The cause-of-death codes are not specific enough, and death certificates involving dog attacks rarely mention dog breeds.

In addition, the implementation of a new data system in 2000, the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System – All Injury Program, allows CDC to track Emergency Department (ED) visits and hospitalizations related to dog bites more accurately. In 2011 (the most recent year that data is available), there were an estimated 355,073 ED visits for dog bites in the United States. However, this system also does not identify specific dog breeds.

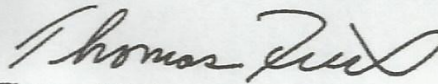
CDC recognizes the importance of protecting the public from health threats, such as dog bites, and we support communities and citizens who do the same. For example, we support the American Veterinary Medical Association's *Community Guide to Dog Bite Prevention*, which highlights that a dog of any breed can bite and underscores the importance of community efforts to encourage responsible ownership and regulation of dangerous dogs. We also recognize that it

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is critical to provide information—especially to families with young children—on how to help prevent dog bites. CDC's information on preventing dog bites, as well as links to additional resources, can be found at www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Dog-Bites/index.html.

Thank you again for your letter and for your interest in CDC's work to prevent injuries and violence. We hope this information is helpful to you and Mr. Borchardt.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Frieden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F".

Thomas Frieden, MD, MPH
Director, CDC