



**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

Date: August 29, 2007

Released By: Florence Neglia, Director
Health Promotion and
Professional Development
(951) 358-7131

Contact: David Herfindahl, MD
Deputy Health Officer
Phone: (951) 358-6196
Fax: (951) 358-4529

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FIRST 2007 CONFIRMED HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN THE COUNTY

A 36-year-old individual in the Riverside area has been infected with West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first confirmed human case of a resident in Riverside County for 2007, announced Dr. Eric Frykman, Public Health Officer for Riverside County. The individual is currently recovering at home following hospitalization. It has not yet been determined where the virus was contracted.

“Tests conducted by the Riverside County Public Health Laboratory confirmed the WNV result. With positive findings from surveillance testing and the first confirmed human case of West Nile Virus this year in Riverside County, residents and visitors are encouraged to continue to take precautions to protect themselves,” Frykman said.

In Riverside County in 2006, there were four WNV infections reported with one death occurring in an elderly individual. To date in 2007, 147 human cases of WNV have been identified in California compared to 96 this time last year.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Health officials emphasized that the risk of serious illness to humans is very low. Most individuals who are infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Elderly individuals and those with compromised immune systems are at great risk for serious illness.

Individuals can reduce their risk of mosquito-borne diseases by taking these precautions:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- When outdoors, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other protective clothing.
- Apply insect repellent according to label instructions.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding.
- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

A comprehensive surveillance program to monitor for WNV in Riverside County has been established by the Department of Environmental Health Vector Control, local mosquito and vector control districts and other state and local agencies. The program includes testing suspect cases in humans and horses, capturing and testing mosquitoes, testing sentinel chickens and evaluating dead birds.

Anyone who becomes ill after exposure to mosquitoes should contact his or her health care provider. The Riverside County Department of Public Health Disease Control Office can be reached at (951) 358-5107 for more information about West Nile Virus. Problems related to mosquito control should be directed to the appropriate mosquito control office:

- Riverside City Mosquito Control 951-351-6127
- Riverside County Mosquito Control 951-766-9454
- Northwest Mosquito and Vector Control District 951-340-9792
- Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District 760-342-8287

If you are unsure of which agency services are available in your area you may go to: <http://westnile.ca.gov/ziplocator.php> and enter your zip code.

Information about WNV is available on the WEB site established for surveillance in California: <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>

Or on the Department of Public Health web page at <http://www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org/>

Dead birds can be reported on that same Web site or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473).

#####