DCHHS CONFIRMS FOURTH HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE

August 12, 2005 - Health officials with Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) today confirmed a fourth human case of West Nile Disease. The patient, a male in his 60s residing in the 75229 zip code, has been diagnosed with West Nile Meningo-encephalitis. During a news conference on yesterday, DCHHS officials announced the county’s second and third human cases of West Nile disease. Those patients, both females in their 40s residing in 75041 and 75238 zip codes, were diagnosed with West Nile Meningitis. The first case, a male in his 40s residing in 75208 zip code, was confirmed to have contracted a mild case of West Nile Fever. For medical confidentiality and personal privacy reasons, DCHHS is not providing additional information about patients.

“The month of August has historically been the peak time period for new cases of West Nile disease,” said Dr. John Carlo of the Dallas County Health Department. “This new case involves West Nile Meningo-encephalitis, a serious form of the disease. The patient is hospitalized and improving,” Carlo continued.

West Nile Virus, the virus that causes West Nile Disease, can be contracted in humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Three forms of West Nile Disease—West Nile Fever, West Nile Meningitis, and now West Nile Meningo-encephalitis—have been seen in Dallas County this year.

The symptoms of West Nile Meningo-encephalitis include fever, weakness, muscle, joint and bone pain and severe drowsiness. High fever, headache, and stiff neck are common symptoms of meningitis in anyone over the age of 2 years. These symptoms can develop over several hours, or they may take 1 to 2 days. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In newborns and small infants, the classic symptoms of fever, headache, and neck stiffness may be absent or difficult to detect, and the infant may only appear slow or inactive, or be irritable, have vomiting, or be feeding poorly. As the disease progresses, patients of any age may have seizures. Symptoms of West Nile Fever include fever, headache, muscle aches and fatigue.

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Health officials have notified the City of Dallas and the city will hand out flyers to residents in the area, increase surveillance and spray for mosquitoes over the next few weeks. The City of Dallas has their own mosquito control program and all questions should be directed to 311.

To lessen the risk of exposures, officials recommend wearing long sleeve shirts, long pants and using insect repellent whenever participating in outdoor activities during the peak mosquito times of dusk and dawn. The public may call the DCHHS Environmental Health Division at 214-819-2115 or the DCHHS Public Information Hotline at 214-819-6001 during normal business hours for more information about mosquito activities in Dallas County.

As in previous years, public education and personal protection is vital in protecting the public from the disease. DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson urges the public to do the following in order to protect themselves, their homes, and their yards from mosquitoes:

**PROTECT YOURSELF:**
- When outside, wear long, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing to avoid mosquito bites.
- Use insect repellent products containing “DEET” or other EPA approved repellent compounds. Follow product instructions.

**PROTECT YOUR HOUSE**
- Keep doors, porches and window screens in good condition and frames sealed tightly to help keep mosquitoes out of the house.
- Repair any leaking plumbing and outside faucets.

**PROTECT YOUR YARD**
- Get rid of all standing water.
- Empty, remove, cover or turn upside down any receptacle/container that will hold standing water (gutters, bottles, cans, tires, buckets, flower pots, etc.).
- Change water in pet dishes, wading pools, and bird baths daily. Cover trash containers so they will not collect water.

Dallas County West Nile information is also available on the DCHHS website, [www.dallascounty.org](http://www.dallascounty.org) or by calling the DCHHS Public Information Hotline at 214-819-6001.

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