



**DALLAS COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

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From: DCHHS Acute Communicable Disease Epidemiology

To: Dallas County Medical Providers

Date: May 14, 2021

HEALTH ADVISORY: West Nile Virus

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is reporting confirmation of the first positive West Nile Virus (WNV) mosquito trap for 2021 in Dallas County, which was collected May 11th in zip code 75051. The virus was identified by PCR testing of *Culex quinquefasciatus* mosquitoes. The detection of WNV in our mosquito population indicates a risk of infection to humans in our area. No confirmed human cases of WNV infection have yet been reported this year in Texas or Dallas County. *Reports of human cases typically begin locally in the weeks following the first identification of WNV from area Culex quinquefasciatus mosquitoes.*

In the context of the current sustained COVID-19 activity in our community, clinicians are reminded to consider WNV disease in patients presenting with acute febrile illness and symptoms consistent with West Nile fever (e.g. headache, myalgia, arthralgia, weakness, or rash) or West Nile neuroinvasive disease (e.g. fever with aseptic meningitis, encephalitis, or acute flaccid paralysis).

Medical providers should send laboratory testing for WNV in all patients with clinically compatible symptoms. Laboratory diagnosis is usually accomplished by testing serum for WNV-specific IgM by enzyme immunoassays (EIA), which are commercially available. WNV IgM antibodies are usually detectable by 3-8 days after illness onset. In patients with suspected West Nile neuroinvasive disease, *additional* tests may be considered from cerebrospinal fluid (CSF): (1) WNV-specific IgM in CSF, and (2) panel for IgM and IgG antibodies for other endemic arboviruses from CSF. PCR testing for WNV can be performed on CSF or serum specimens that are collected early in the course of illness, and can confirm infection, if results are positive.

Patients at higher risk of severe disease, including those over 50 years of age or with immune-suppression (e.g. organ transplantation, chemotherapy, dialysis, HIV infection), should be reminded to take particular preventive measures to avoid mosquito exposures, including wearing long sleeves and pants when outside and using EPA-registered repellants such as DEET.

Active public health surveillance for WNV in mosquitoes and humans is ongoing. Additional health advisories will be issued if vector indices are noted to be significantly increasing, and when human WNV infections begin to be reported. Please report suspected WNV cases by fax to DCHHS at (214) 819-1933. For questions please contact DCHHS at (214) 819-2004. Information about WNV is available at: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm.