DCHHS Confirms New Human Cases of West Nile Virus

August 22, 2006—Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) has confirmed new human cases of West Nile disease. The new cases involve two patients diagnosed with West Nile fever residing in zip 75218 and 75208, five patients diagnosed with West Nile Encephalitis residing in zip codes 75229, 75233, 75043, 75080, and 75089 and three patients diagnosed with West Nile Meningitis residing in zip codes 75081, 75254 and 75150. To date, Dallas County has had a total of 41 confirmed human cases this year and two deaths associated with West Nile Virus. For medical confidentiality and personal privacy reasons, DCHHS is not providing additional information about the patients. “These new human cases of West Nile virus reflect exposure during the peak of West Nile season,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. “DCHHS had anticipated that we would see a high number of West Nile cases this year due to the continued drought conditions, this is why we continue to urge residents to take the necessary precautions to avoid exposure.”

The most severe type of disease in humans infected with West Nile virus is sometimes called “neuroinvasive disease” because it affects a person’s nervous system. Specific types of neuroinvasive disease include: West Nile Encephalitis, West Nile Meningitis or West Nile Meninigio-Encephalitis. West Nile Fever is another type of illness that can occur in people who become infected with the virus. Symptoms of West Nile virus in humans may include fever, headache, tiredness, muscle aches, confusion, stiff neck, nausea, and sometimes a rash. Although the illness can be as short as a few days, even healthy people have been sick for several weeks. The incubation period for WNV (the period between being bitten by an infected mosquito and showing the first symptoms) varies from three days to 15 days. Anyone who experiences symptoms consistent with WNV should see a physician as soon as possible.

“The number and severity of the human cases we are seeing this year is of course cause for concern,” said Dr. John Carlo, DCHHS Medical Director/Health Authority. “We, once again, advise residents to be diligent in exercising precautions to avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellent and mosquito proofing their homes,” Carlo continued. Studies have shown that the majority of people who contracted the more serious form of West Nile virus did not use insect repellent. “West Nile is here to stay in Dallas County. The eco-system of our area makes for an ideal breeding ground for the house mosquito, which is the biggest culprit in the spread of West Nile

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"Prevention remains the most effective way to protect yourself from contracting West Nile virus," Carlo continued. DCHHS urges the public to protect themselves, their homes, and their yards from mosquitoes by:

**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 birdbaths daily.
- Cover trash containers so they will not collect water.

In 2005, Dallas County had 44 confirmed human cases of West Nile with one death. In 2004, DCHHS reported a total of 16 human West Nile cases (6 with West Nile fever and 10 with neuroinvasive West Nile) with no deaths. In 2003, Dallas County had a total of 50 human West Nile cases with 4 deaths. In 2002, the first year the virus was reported in Dallas County, there were 36 human cases with 3 deaths.

For more information about mosquito activities in Dallas County, call the DCHHS Environmental Health Division at 214-819-2115 during normal business hours, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. or visit www.dallascounty.org. Several municipalities in Dallas County have their own environmental health departments which handle mosquito abatement. If your city is shown below, please contact the number shown for more information.

Addison 972-450-2827 www.addisontexas.net
Carrollton 972-466-3420, Press 3 when prompted. www.cityofcarrollton.com
Cedar Hill 972-291-5128
Coppell 972-304-3500 or 972-304-3515 www.ci.coppell.tx.us
Dallas 311 www.dallascityhall.com
Farmers Branch 972-919-2536 http://www.ci.farmers-branch.tx.us/EnvironmentalHealth/mosquitocontrol.html
Garland 972-205-3720 www.ci.garland.tx.us
Grand Prairie 972-237-8055 www.ci.grand-prairie.tx.us
Irving 972-721-3755 www.ci.irving.tx.us
Mesquite 972-329-8715 www.cityofmesquite.com
Richardson 972-744-4080 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays), 24-Hour Information Line 972-744-4081

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