



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
July 6, 2004

CONTACT: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

STATE DEPT. OF HEALTH SERVICES SAYS IT IS NOT WEST NILE VIRUS *Local Woman With Symptoms Typical Of Severe WNV Tests Negative*

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) received confirmation from the California Department of Health Services (CDHS), that test results for a possible human case West Nile virus (WNV) in San Diego County are negative.

Although a 45-year-old Escondido woman was ill with symptoms typical of WNV, and a preliminary test came back positive for the same family of viruses as WNV, CDHS did a confirmatory test, which did not show WNV.

"The preliminary test could have been a false positive, or it might have identified a related virus," said Nancy Bowen, M.D., County Public Health Officer, "but we really don't know what made the woman sick. At this time we only know that the State determined that a confirmatory test for West Nile Virus was negative for this woman."

In a press conference earlier today, Gary Erbeck, Director of the County Department of Environmental Health, said that human cases of WNV are usually preceded by dead birds and mosquito pools that test positive for the disease. To date, San Diego County has found none of these.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals via mosquitoes, which become infected after feeding on infected birds.

HHS will continue surveillance of local emergency departments and clinics, and DEH's Vector Control will continue its surveillance activities, including trapping mosquitoes, studying sentinel chickens, reporting on dead birds and checking on horses.

For more information on WNV, visit the County's West Nile Virus prevention Web site at www.sdfightthebite.com.

###