



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Aug. 18, 2008

Contact: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

Department of Environmental Health Contact: Greg Slawson (858) 495-5358

ONE ADDITIONAL HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE REPORTED

Case Count Rises to Five; County Continues Surveillance

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports one more confirmed locally-acquired human case of West Nile virus (WNV). The additional case brings the year to date total cases to five.

A 65-year-old Chula Vista woman was hospitalized with meningitis after developing symptoms consistent with WNV infection, and is now recovering at home. The other four cases include a 24-year-old San Diego man, a 38-year-old Carlsbad woman, a 58-year-old Del Mar woman and a 52-year-old East San Diego County man.

“West Nile virus can have lasting effects in some people, including paralysis and nerve damage,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “That’s why we urge the public to take the appropriate precautions to protect against contracting WNV.” In 2007, 15 people tested positive for locally-acquired WNV.

Precautions include using insect repellent when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active; using insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535; not sleeping outside, unprotected, while camping; wearing long sleeves and pants; and ensuring screens on windows and doors fit tightly and have no holes or other damage.

Most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms or become seriously ill. Nearly one in five who do fall ill may suffer from headache, fever, nausea, fatigue, skin rash or swollen glands. The risk of complications increases for those over age 50. If you suspect you have WNV, contact your healthcare provider. If you have no healthcare provider, call HHSA’s Community Epidemiology Branch at (619) 515-6620.

HHSA is working closely with the County Department of Environmental Health (DEH), which continues its WNV control activities to check for and eradicate possible sources of the virus in San Diego County. A total of 262 dead birds and eight sentinel chickens have tested positive for WNV this year, one horse has died and 10 positive mosquito pools have been identified.

For more information or to report dead birds, please call the County’s WNV information line toll free at (888) 551-INFO (4636) or visit the County’s web site at www.SDFighttheBite.com.

###