Date: August 24, 2007

Risk of Exposure to Rabid Bats

Since August 10, 2007, three (3) bats discovered at different locations in the Escondido and Poway areas have tested positive for rabies at the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (SDCPHL). The bats were discovered on separate occasions either sick or dead. Several people associated with these incidents have begun rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Of 16 bats tested for rabies to date in 2007 at SDCPHL, 4 bats (25%) have tested positive for rabies. Bats tested at SDCPHL are typically found dead or dying by persons known or suspected to have had contact with the bat. In 2006, SDCPHL tested 22 bats and 2 (9%) were positive for rabies.

Healthcare providers are reminded to seriously consider rabies PEP when any known or potential contact with a bat is reported by their patients. Potential exposure to a bat includes most bare-handed contact with a bat, sleeping in the same room as a bat, or an adult finding a bat in a room of an unattended child, mentally disabled or intoxicated person. The Community Epidemiology Branch is available 24/7 for consultation as needed.

West Nile Virus Case Diagnosed in San Diego County

An 85-year old resident of Los Angeles County presented at a San Diego hospital on August 8, 2007 with 24-hour history of fever, chills, cough, vomiting, altered mental status and pneumonia. He was diagnosed with meningoencephalitis and subsequently tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). The patient resided in Los Angeles County during his incubation period and exposure history to mosquitos could not be determined.

In 2006, two (2) San Diego County residents were diagnosed with WNV, one of which was locally acquired. Healthcare providers are encouraged to consider WNV for patients presenting with meningitis, encephalitis, atypical Guillain Barre Syndrome or acute flaccid paralysis.

Thank you for your continued participation.

Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN)
County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency
Community Epidemiology Branch