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NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

Nevada State Health Division Announces First Human Cases of West Nile Virus in 2006

Carson City – The Nevada State Health Division is reporting two human cases associated with West Nile Virus (WNV). The individuals are under the age 50 and they are Humboldt County residents.

The Humboldt County individuals have the less severe form of the disease, West Nile fever.

“West Nile Virus has been detected in mosquito pools and in one horse in Humboldt County,” said Dr. Bradford Lee, Nevada State Health Officer. “I cannot stress enough the importance of practicing the preventive measures to reduce the chance of being bitten by mosquitoes. Remember to use mosquito repellent containing either DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, preferably in that order, wear long sleeve shirts, pants and socks, be aware that mosquitoes are most active during dusk and dawn, remove standing water from around your house and check to make sure the screens on your windows and doors fit properly.”

West Nile Virus most often is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes are WNV carriers that become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes can then spread WNV to humans and other animals when they bite. West Nile Virus is **NOT** spread through casual contact such as touching or kissing a person infected with the virus.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most people infected with WNV will not have any type of illness or symptoms. It is estimated that 20 percent of the people who become infected will develop West Nile fever. Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness and body aches.

Approximately one in 150 persons (less than one percent) infected with WNV will develop a more severe form of the disease, West Nile encephalitis or meningitis. Symptoms of the more severe disease include severe headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis.

“Our first confirmed human case from the 2005 WNV season was reported July 27,” Dr. Lee said.

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“It appears that we are following the same timeline as last year. We had 30 confirmed human cases associated with WNV in 2005, three of which were Humboldt County residents.”

While there is no specific treatment for WNV infection, people who have been exposed to mosquitoes and experience symptoms of the more severe illness are encouraged to contact their health care provider immediately.

Dr. Michael Poulos, Nevada State Veterinarian, continues to urge owners of horses, donkeys and mules to get their animals vaccinated. “While there isn’t a vaccine for humans, there is a vaccine available for horses, donkeys and mules. If you haven’t vaccinated your equines, you need to vaccinate them now.”

For more information about West Nile Virus, please access the following websites:

<http://health2k.state.nv.us>

<http://agri.state.nv.us>

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SPECIAL NOTE TO THE MEDIA:

The Nevada State Health Division will be updating its West Nile Virus website every Friday, reporting new confirmed human cases associated with West Nile Virus.

URL: <http://health2k.state.nv.us/php/WNVCurrent/WNVactivity.htm>

Telephone numbers for public health questions:

Statewide: 1-888-608-4623

Washoe County: 775-328-2434

Carson City: 775-887-2190

Clark County – West Nile Hotline: 702-759-1220

Animal Health Questions:

Statewide: 775-688-1182, Ext. 232