



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 11, 2008

Southern Nevada Health District reports season's first West Nile case
Prevention is urged

LAS VEGAS – The Southern Nevada Health District today reported Clark County's first probable human case associated with West Nile virus for 2008. The individual, a man over age 50, contracted the more serious form of the illness. To date, the health district has reported positive mosquitoes in the 89122 zip code in Clark County. The Nevada State Health Division reported one human case associated with West Nile virus in a Lyon County resident and positive mosquito pools have been located in Lovelock in Pershing County.

The Clark County case is considered probable as confirmatory testing can take months to complete.

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which acquire the virus by feeding on infected birds. The illness is not spread person to person.

"As the summer progresses, it is important to practice preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites," said Dr. Lawrence Sands, chief health officer. "Mosquitoes that can carry West Nile virus are active throughout Clark County and in neighboring counties and states," said Sands.

The health district strongly stresses the need for individual protective actions to avoid mosquito bites:

- Apply an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) according to manufacturer's directions. *Repellents containing picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus also have some efficacy. However, DEET is the best-studied and most-effective repellent available.*
- Wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, when outdoors.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, notably at dusk (the first two hours after sunset) and dawn.
- Eliminate areas of standing water, including bird baths, un-maintained swimming pools and sprinkler runoff, which support mosquito breeding.

The health district's mosquito surveillance program generally begins in spring and continues through the end of September. Environmental health specialists routinely survey and treat known breeding sources for mosquitoes and trap them for identification and testing for West Nile virus, Western equine encephalitis and St. Louis encephalitis.

In 2007, Nevada had a total of 12 human cases of West Nile virus. For more information or to report mosquitoes, "green" swimming pools or stagnant water sources, visit the health district website at www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org or call the mosquito control hotline, (702) 759-1220.

-30-

CONTACTS

Jennifer Sizemore: Sizemore@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1225

Stephanie Bethel: Bethel@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1393