

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 15, 2009

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KCHD Encourages Summer Mosquito Control

The Kanawha-Charleston Health Department has been notified that West Nile Virus (WNV) carrying mosquitoes have been identified in the Lower Falls area of Tornado in Kanawha County. WNV appears to be endemic in most areas of Kanawha County. Seven different samples or pools of mosquitoes have been identified within the last few weeks in this area. The WNV became apparent in 1999 with infections in birds, horses, humans and other species throughout the United States. WNV was detected in pooled mosquito samples from Kanawha County in 2004 and human cases were reported in Putnam and Wood counties in 2002. The first human case in Kanawha County was identified in 2006 in the Elkview area.

Mosquitoes can carry West Nile Virus, LaCrosse virus and other viruses that can cause serious inflammations of brain and spinal cord tissues. WNV infects a variety of species from birds to humans. Mosquitoes can acquire the virus by feeding on an infected bird and then transmit it by feeding on a person. Symptoms of WNV include unexplained fever, especially in conjunction with headache, and seizures or other neurological abnormalities. Although most people infected with WNV do not become ill, some may develop a serious infection with a fatality of 7-10% of the cases. LaCrosse encephalitis is primarily spread by the bite of a treehole mosquito. The virus most often affects children under the age of 16, with symptoms including headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, and disorientation. West Virginia has one of the highest number of reported cases every year. Water-holding cavities in trees are its natural habitat, but man-made containers are also important breeding sites.

Stagnant water in buckets, watering cans, rimless tires, unused swimming pools, bird baths and flower pots, provides "hot spots" for disease carrying mosquito species to breed. Garbage, trash piles and tarp covered items can offer many opportunities for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. A small amount of water can be a breeding ground for mosquitoes. All citizens are urged to remove mosquito breeding sites from their properties to protect themselves and their neighbors. Standing water that cannot be drained should be treated with mosquito dunks (larvacide). During outdoor activities, protect exposed skin with either clothing or an insect repellent such as DEET.

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