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Public Health Update – West Nile virus

The Southern Nevada Health District is reporting an additional human case of West Nile in a 29-year-old man with the less serious form of the illness. He was not hospitalized. In addition, several West Nile positive mosquito pools in the 89011, 89121, 89141 and 89029 zip code in Laughlin were recently identified. Cooler temperatures and shorter daylight hours are expected to diminish mosquito breeding and risk for infection, however, the health district continues to remind Southern Nevadans they can take precautions against West Nile virus.

Among the six previously reported human cases in Southern Nevada this year, two patients had a less serious form of the illness, and five were hospitalized. One patient has died and one remains hospitalized, the others were discharged. The death was the fourth West Nile-related death in Clark County since 2003.

Earlier this season, the health district's vector control program identified two West Nile-positive mosquito pools, one each in the 89145 and 89107 zip codes. The Nevada Department of Agriculture reported that an unvaccinated horse in the 89130 zip code contracted West Nile disease. There is currently no vaccine for people. The link to the Department of Agriculture is: http://agri.nv.gov/Animal2_west_nile_virus_new.htm#Equine

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that West Nile virus infections and illness rates are on record pace this year with more than 4,700 cases and 219 deaths reported through October 23 throughout the U.S. The health district reminds the community to take measures to prevent against West Nile virus.

With the identification of positive mosquito pools in Clark County it is likely that West Nile virus infected mosquitoes are present throughout the valley and precautions against the disease are recommended for all residents and visitors.

West Nile virus can be prevented by using insect repellents and eliminating sources of standing water which support mosquito breeding. For information about prevention tips, visit the health district's West Nile virus pages on its website: <http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/west-nile/index.php>

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Public Health Update: West Nile – add one

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. Many people with the virus will have no symptoms or very mild clinical symptoms of illness. Mild symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach, and back. In some cases the virus can cause severe illness and even death. In 2011, Nevada reported 16 cases, 11 of which were in Clark County. There were no human cases of West Nile virus reported in Clark County in 2010.

The health district's environmental health specialists routinely survey and treat known breeding sources for mosquitoes and trap them for identification. However, the health district is no longer treating breeding sources on private property, such as green pools. Residents can now report green swimming pools and standing or stagnant water sources to local code enforcement agencies. Contact information for local jurisdictions' code enforcement is available on the health district website at: <http://southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/forms/mosquito.php>.

In addition to West Nile virus, mosquitoes are also tested for Western equine encephalitis and St. Louis encephalitis.

The health district recommends the following to prevent mosquito bites and to eliminate breeding sources:

- 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, "green" swimming pools and sprinkler runoff, which support mosquito breeding.

Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict, on YouTube www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict or Twitter: www.twitter.com/SNHDinfo. The health district is now available in Spanish on Twitter www.twitter.com/TuSNHD. Don't have a Twitter account? Follow the health district on your phone by texting "follow SNHDinfo" to 40404.