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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Activity Across Michigan

West Nile Virus (WNV) has been confirmed in 121 birds and five horses across the State of Michigan. Anyone living in an area where WNV is present in mosquitoes can become infected. In Michigan, outbreaks of WNV have been occurring every summer since 2002. Residents are reminded that the best way to protect against West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses is to prevent mosquito bites.

People who work outdoors or enjoy spending time outdoors are at an increased risk for WNV infection from mosquito bites. Adults 60 years old and older have the highest risk of severe illness resulting from West Nile Virus.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus include a high fever, confusion, muscles weakness, and a severe headache. More serious complications include neurological illnesses, such as meningitis and encephalitis. Last year, there were 43 serious illnesses and three deaths related to WNV in Michigan. Nationally, there were 2,038 human cases of the virus and 94 deaths reported to the Centers for Disease Control.

“The best way to prevent WNV is to avoid mosquito bites,” said Dr. Michael Collins, Medical Director for Grand Traverse County Health Department. Protect yourself from mosquito bites by:

- using an EPA registered insect repellent (<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents>),
- wearing long sleeves and pants while outside,
- avoid being outside during dusk & dawn (mosquitoes most active time), and
- draining all sources of standing water near your home to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.



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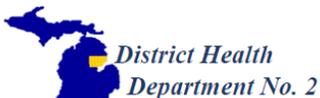
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Mosquitoes become infected when they bite an infected bird. Birds are the natural animal reservoir for the virus and carry it in their blood. Most birds show no symptoms of infection, but certain bird species, such as crows, blue jays and ravens, are more sensitive to the virus and are more likely to become sick and die when they become infected with the virus.

For information about West Nile Virus activity in Michigan and to report sick or dead birds, visit www.michigan.gov/westnile. Additional information can also be found at www.cdc.gov/westnile.

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