



## NEWS RELEASE

### Department of Public Health

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## San Bernadino County reports first death of 2015 from West Nile Virus

### Riverside County has reported three human cases of West Nile Virus, but no deaths in 2015

San Bernardino County Department of Public Health has confirmed the first death from West Nile Virus (WNV) in 2015. A total of five WNV cases have been confirmed within the County this year; the first death occurred in a previously reported case. San Bernardino County reported eight confirmed WNV cases at this time in 2014 with no deaths. Throughout the state, there are 36 confirmed WNV cases so far this year. This amount exceeds the California five-year annual average of 23 cases.

"We are greatly saddened by this death that has occurred in San Bernardino County. We extend our deepest condolences to the family. We continue to see an increase of West Nile Virus activity throughout the county and therefore, we strongly encourage that the public takes appropriate precautionary measures to protect themselves against mosquito bites," said Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Health Officer. "People over 50 years old should be especially cautious, as they are more likely to develop serious illness if they contract the virus."

WNV is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Signs and symptoms of WNV may include fever, body aches, rash, nausea, vomiting and headache. Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms. However, some people may develop severe symptoms which can lead to brain inflammation or paralysis. The most effective way to avoid WNV infection is to prevent mosquito bites.

Residents can protect themselves from mosquito bites by taking the following precautions:

- **DAWN** and **DUSK** – Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active.
- **DRESS** – Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts that are loose fitting and light colored.
- **DRAIN** – Remove or drain all standing water around your property where mosquitoes lay eggs (birdbaths, ponds, old tires, buckets, clogged gutters or puddles from leaky sprinklers).
- **DEET** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET. When using DEET, be sure to read and follow the label instructions.
- **DOORS** – Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes to prevent mosquitoes from entering the home.
- **REPORT** – Report green or neglected pools by calling 1 (800) 442-2283. Press 3 when prompted.

The public can participate in the WNV surveillance program by reporting dead birds to the state's WNV toll-free hotline at (877) WNV-BIRD (968-2473) or at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov).

For more information on WNV, visit the San Bernardino County Mosquito and Vector Control Program at <http://1.usa.gov/1N5qvUM> or call the Communicable Disease Section (CDS) at 1 (800) 722-4794.

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