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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

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County environmental health officials offer reminder after two rodents test positive for hantavirus

Two out of 11 rodents collected in late December from the San Timoteo Canyon at the Norton Younglove Preserve near the city of Beaumont have tested positive for hantavirus. The California Department of Public Health confirmed the mice that Riverside County Environmental Health officials submitted have tested positive for the virus. Over the past decade, approximately 10 percent of the rodents collected in Riverside County have tested positive for hantavirus. This is fairly consistent with the average for California.

Hantavirus can be transmitted by inhaling tiny droplets contaminated with the virus from deer-mouse droppings and urine.

“Hantavirus can be a serious, even deadly disease when infectious material like mouse droppings and urine are inhaled,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County public health officer. “Taking simple precautions can greatly reduce your risk.”

To date, there are no documented human cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome originating within Riverside County.

Infected rodents do not appear to show any signs of illness so it is important to keep from stirring-up materials while cleaning up any mouse-infested areas in and around homes, especially in rural areas. Residents can take the following steps to reduce their exposure to hantavirus:

- Ventilate the affected area for several hours before cleanup by opening doors and windows.
- Use rubber gloves.

- Apply a 10 percent solution of bleach or household disinfectant to contaminated surfaces and allow at least 15 minutes contact time before removal.
- Clean the affected area with a sponge or mop. DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM.
- Double-bag any dead rodents and cleanup materials (newspaper, paper towels, etc.) securely in plastic bags and seal.
- Before removing gloves, wash gloved hands in disinfectant or with soap and water. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water after removing gloves. Dispose of gloves and cleanup materials with other household waste.

Individuals having concerns about illness should contact their health provider. For more information on hantavirus and the Vector Control Program, contact the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health office in Hemet at (951) 766-9454. Information also is available on the department website at www.rivcoeh.org and Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/RiversideCountyEH/>