

Date: August 2, 2013

Released by: Jose Arballo Jr., Public Information Officer
Office: (951) 358-5599
Cell: (951) 712-3705
jarballo@rivcocha.org

Contact: Barbara Cole, RN, PHN, MSN
Director – Disease Control
Office: (951) 358-5107
Cell: (951) 906-9001

**PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER ANNOUNCES FIRST CONFIRMED
HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN THE COUNTY THIS YEAR**

A 60-year-old woman is the first confirmed human case of West Nile Virus in Riverside County this year, said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Public Health Officer. The individual, who was hospitalized and is now recovering at home, lives in Southwest Riverside County.

The virus is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Health officials emphasized that the risk of serious illness to humans is low. Most individuals who are infected with the virus will not experience any illness. Elderly individuals and those with compromised immune systems are at greatest risk for serious illness.

In 2012, there were 19 confirmed human cases in the county and there has not been a death from the illness since 2008.

Individuals can reduce their risk of mosquito-borne diseases by taking these precautions:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- When outdoors, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other protective clothing.
- Apply insect repellent according to the label instructions.
- Make sure that the doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding.

- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work (for the location of local agency/district by using zip codes see the State's WNV Website).

A comprehensive surveillance program to monitor for the virus in Riverside County has been established by the Department of Environmental Health's Vector Control Program, local mosquito and vector control districts and other state and local agencies. The program includes testing suspect cases in humans and horses, capturing and testing certain species of mosquitoes with potential for disease transmission, testing sentinel chickens and evaluating dead birds. These surveillance techniques allow the vector control agencies to focus their mosquito control efforts.

Anyone who becomes ill after exposure to mosquitoes should contact their health care provider. The Disease Control Office can be reached at (951) 358-5107 for more information on West Nile Virus.

Information about WNV is available at:

- <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>
- <http://www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org/Services/WestNileVirus.aspx>

Dead birds can be reported on the state's website or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473).