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FIRST TWO HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTIONS CONFIRMED IN STANISLAUS COUNTY

Stanislaus County – Stanislaus County Public Health has confirmed the first two human West Nile virus (WNV) infections in the county. Both were adult males and did not have any symptoms. Public Health and the local mosquito abatement districts had announced the first pools of mosquitoes testing positive for West Nile virus on June 2nd, 2020.

West Nile virus is most commonly transmitted to people and animals through the bite of a mosquito infected with the virus. About one in five people will develop West Nile Fever with symptoms of headache, fever and fatigue. However, some people -- less than one percent -- will develop serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis.

People 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious illness when infected with WNV. Studies also indicate that those with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greatest risk for serious illness. "With the arrival of summer, we all need to remember to protect ourselves from mosquito bites. Because there is no vaccine and no specific treatment, it is very important that people take all the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families," advises Dr. Julie Vaishampayan, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer.

The Turlock Mosquito and Eastside Mosquito Abatement Districts (MADs) have already confirmed the detection of West Nile Virus (WNV) back on May 26th; however, since then the Districts have continued to collect an above average amount of WNV infected mosquito samples in their Districts for this time of the year. As of June 13, 2020, WNV has been detected in 10 California counties with the WNV activity confirmed in 8 dead birds, 48 mosquito samples. Stanislaus County has had no dead birds but 19 WNV mosquito samples.

"Although the mosquito populations remain light to moderate in most areas, the concern is the above average number of mosquito samples that we are detecting with West Nile Virus early in the season. As temperatures continue to rise, so will mosquito populations and virus activity," shared District Manager David Heft. Both Districts urge residents to dump and drain items around their home that may hold water which allows for mosquito breeding and to contact their District for fish to place in ponds and troughs.

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The Districts will continue with their surveillance programs identifying mosquito breeding sources and mosquito borne disease activity. Based on the results of surveillance data, aerial and ground applications will be utilized as needed to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus infection and other mosquito borne diseases. The Districts anticipate more WNV and mosquitoes in the coming months and would like to remind residents they can help by taking the following precautions:

- Dump or drain standing water. These are places mosquitoes like to lay their eggs.
- Defend yourself against mosquitoes by using repellants containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Avoid being outdoors at dusk and dawn. These are the times when WNV carrying mosquitoes are generally most active.
- Report Neglected Swimming pools to your local mosquito abatement district.
- Use tight fitting door and window screens to keep mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Contact your veterinarian for information on vaccinating equine against WNV.

For additional information or to request service, residents should contact their local District Stanislaus County residents:

North of the Tuolumne River contact:

Eastside Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 522-4098 (www.eastsidemosquito.com)

South of the Tuolumne River contact:

Turlock Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 634-1234 (www.turlockmosquito.org)

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