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City Moves Up Trap Setting by Two Weeks to Get Jump on West Nile Virus **Milwaukee Health Department gears up for West Nile surveillance**

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) will initiate mosquito trapping on May 21, 2003, two weeks earlier than last year to begin monitoring of mosquito populations as part of West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance. MHD will again partner with researchers from the Marshfield Clinic in the placement of 40 mosquito traps in Milwaukee County, 20 of which will be set-up throughout the City of Milwaukee. The mosquito traps will assist the MHD and partners to assess the level of mosquito activity within the community during the coming summer months and degree of mosquito WNV infectivity. This type of data is useful in assessing the risk of WNV infection to humans. Mosquitoes caught in the traps will be tested to determine what species are found in the area and which if any are infected with WNV.

“Surveillance of birds, mosquitoes and humans will be a key components of the Milwaukee Health Department action plan associated with WNV prevention and control during the coming summer months”, said Paul Biedrzycki, Disease Control and Prevention Manager for MHD. “Typically, you will see WNV infection in birds and other animals prior to appearance of disease in humans. Since the virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, monitoring trends in mosquito population and infectivity allows us to better understand the probability of human infection occurring in the community at large.”

Last year in Wisconsin there were 52 probable cases and 3 deaths associated with WNV infection in humans.

Citizens are urged to follow precautionary measures including avoidance and source reduction as means of reducing risk for WNV infection. This includes limiting outdoor activity during period of peak mosquito activity (dusk and dawn), wearing long-sleeve clothing and pants, applying repellent containing DEET and repairing window and door screens. Eliminating pools of stagnant water around or near the house or other buildings that serve as breeding habitat for mosquitoes is also warranted. This includes emptying standing water in rain gutters, flower pots, cans, tires or other containers.

WHEN: Wednesday, May 21, 2003

WHERE: Washington Park
40th and Lisbon Avenue

TIME: Press briefing 9:00 a.m.
Installation of traps 9:15 a.m.