

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Milwaukee Health Department Confirms Mosquitos Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Infected mosquitos serve as a warning sign for illness in individuals; city continues seasonal surveillance and prevention program

MILWAUKEE – The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has confirmed the first West Nile virus positive mosquito pools in the city for 2013. The mosquitos were collected and tested as part of the MHD’s seasonal West Nile surveillance and prevention efforts that includes reporting of birds, mosquitos, and human cases of infection along with placement of larvicide treatments and community outreach.

“Though the City of Milwaukee Health Department has yet to see a confirmed case of West Nile virus in an individual this year, a positive mosquito test serves as a reminder to all city residents that it is time to take steps to protect themselves against mosquito bites,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker.

At this time, the state of Wisconsin has one reported case of West Nile virus in an individual in 2013. In 2012, the state reported the highest number of West Nile virus cases since 2002, confirming 57 cases and five deaths statewide, including 15 cases and one death in the city of Milwaukee.

Most West Nile virus infections occur between June and September, and are transmitted to humans through a mosquito bite. Not all mosquitos carry the virus, and only 20 percent of individuals bit by an infected mosquito will develop symptoms such as fever, rash, headache, and joint pain. Those most susceptible to serious illness and hospitalization associated with West Nile virus are individuals over 60 years of age and those with underlying medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and hypertension. If you experience symptoms of West Nile Virus, contact your health care provider.

The MHD reminds individuals to take steps to prevent mosquito bites, including:

- Mosquito-proofing your home by fixing holes in screens, windows, and doors.
- Wearing light-colored, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants at dawn and dusk, when mosquitos are most active.
- Preventing mosquitos from breeding by removing stagnant water from areas such as bird baths, flowerpots, and gutters.
- Using an insect repellent with DEET, IR 3535, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.

For more information on West Nile virus, visit www.milwaukee.gov/health.

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