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N E W S

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ODH RECORDS 2009's FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS

Spike in West Nile-positive mosquitoes also reported

COLUMBUS – Ohio's first probable human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in 2009 was recorded today by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), which also reported a sharp increase in the number of WNV-positive mosquitoes.

The patient, an 11-year-old male from Cuyahoga County, is recovering. Meanwhile, the number of WNV-positive mosquito pools in the State of Ohio nearly doubled in the past week to 97.

Because humans can get WNV only from the bite of an infected mosquito, ODH reminds Ohioans to take steps to help prevent infection.

“Unfortunately, West Nile is endemic in Ohio,” said ODH Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. “Fortunately, however, it can be reduced and prevented by taking some simple, proactive steps.”

To avoid possible infection from mosquito bites: If you are outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, be sure to wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, shoes and socks. Light colors are least attractive to mosquitoes. Use insect repellent and follow the label directions.

To eliminate mosquito breeding sites near your home: Remove all discarded tires and other water-holding containers, such as tin cans and unused flower pots, from your property. Eliminate standing water from your property. Make sure all roof gutters are clean and properly draining. Clean and chlorinate pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs. Keep them empty when not in use and drain water from pool covers. Change water in bird baths weekly.

About one in every 150 people bitten by an infected mosquito will become severely ill; most people will experience mild, flu-like symptoms – including, fever, headache, tiredness and body aches – or none at all.

Ohio has recorded human cases of WNV each year since 2002 when there were 441 cases. There were 108 in 2003, 12 in 2004, 61 in 2005, 48 in 2006, 23 in 2007 and 15 in 2008. For more information, visit the ODH Web site at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov>.