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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE BAY AREA'S FIRST CONFIRMED  
HUMAN INFECTION OF WEST NILE VIRUS

A man from Vacaville has been confirmed to have the first human infection of West Nile virus (WNV), in Solano County for 2008, announced Ronald W. Chapman, MD, MPH, Health Officer/Deputy Director, Health and Social Services Department, Solano County.

"The man who is well, with no symptoms, had volunteered to donate blood and due to their excellent screening, the blood bank found his West Nile virus infection," said Dr. Chapman. "It is important to know that it is very safe to give blood, and that blood banks routinely screen for a variety of infections in order to keep the nation's blood supply healthy. We are in the process of researching the patient's travel history to try to determine whether he contracted the virus in Solano County."

As of July 31 this year, the California Department of Public Health reports that there have been thirteen human cases of WNV from seven counties across the state. There have been no WNV-related deaths reported in California in 2008.

"It's important to remember that 80 percent of people who contract WNV will have no symptoms. Approximately 19 percent of people infected with WNV will develop West Nile fever and notice mild, flu-like symptoms. Less than one percent of those infected will develop severe neurological disease," Dr. Chapman explained.

Symptoms of West Nile fever include headache, fatigue, fever, skin rash on the trunk of the body, swollen lymph glands and eye pain. "West Nile virus is rarely life threatening," Dr. Chapman said.

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PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION



Health and Social Services Department

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“The most severe forms of the virus may affect the central nervous system causing meningitis and encephalitis.” Although people of all ages can become ill, people at most risk for developing severe neurological diseases as a result of WNV infection include those over age 50, those with immune systems compromised by illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, or people who are undergoing cancer treatments.

“Anyone who experiences flu-like symptoms with a stiff neck should seek medical care,” Dr. Chapman emphasized. There is presently no vaccine or antiviral treatment available to combat WNV in humans.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get WNV after feeding on the blood of infected birds.

“The best strategy to avoid contracting WNV is to prevent mosquito bites. I strongly urge the public to practice the five D’s of prevention,” Dr. Chapman added.

- Dawn and dusk - wear pants and long-sleeve shirts when you are going to be out at these times.
- DEET – use insect repellent that contains DEET according to packaging directions (non-DEET alternatives, picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are also approved by the EPA).
- Doors and windows – make sure screens are tight fitting and doors close completely.
- Drain standing water around your house and use mosquito fish in areas, such as ornamental ponds and horse troughs.
- Dead birds – report dead birds and squirrels online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov) or by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473).

“We are vigilantly working to control the mosquito population in our county. Our mosquito counts have been very low so far for this season. However, unmaintained swimming pools due to

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## WNV Human Case – 3

home foreclosures have become a problem statewide and can potentially produce the types of mosquitoes that spread WNV. If you have seen a green pool, please report it to us at (707) 437-1116,” said Jon Blegen, Solano County Mosquito Abatement District Manager.

In 2006 and 2007, Solano County had eight and one confirmed human cases of WNV respectively. To date this season, there have been six confirmed WNV positive birds in Solano County, five from Vacaville and one from Suisun.

Additional information about WNV can be found on the Internet at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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