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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE SEASON'S FIRST CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS

A forty-seven year old woman from Vacaville is the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus (WNV), in Solano County for 2007, announced Ronald W. Chapman, MD, MPH, Health Officer/Deputy Director, Health and Social Services Department, Solano County.

"The woman has West Nile virus neuroinvasive disease and is recovering at home," said Dr. Chapman. According to the patient's travel history, it is likely that she contracted the virus in Solano County.

As of August 17 this year, the California Department of Public Health reports that there have been 120 human cases of WNV from 21 counties across the state. This number of human cases is approaching double the number of human cases confirmed as of the same date last year. There have been seven WNV-related deaths reported in California in 2007.

"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.

"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

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PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION



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## WNV Human Case – 2

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 not delay seeking 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 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 2005 and 2006, Solano County had five and eight confirmed human cases of WNV respectively. To date this season, there has been one confirmed case of WNV in a bird in Solano County, an American Crow in Fairfield.

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

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