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BUTTE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH CONFIRMS FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. – A Chico woman has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) according to Dr. Mark Lundberg, Butte County Health Officer. This is the first confirmed human case in Butte County for 2010. The elderly woman was hospitalized with neuroinvasive disease, the most severe form of WNV. At this time she is stable.

“This is an important reminder that West Nile Virus is here to stay,” said Lundberg. “We know from local surveillance efforts that West Nile Virus is circulating locally in mosquitoes and wild birds. West Nile is active in many parts of Butte County, so all residents need to protect themselves from mosquito bites. Prevention is the key to stopping the spread of the virus.”

As of August 17, 2010, WNV activity has been detected in 28 of California’s 58 counties, with 7 of those counties reporting human cases of WNV infection. In Butte County, two dead birds have tested positive for the virus, as well as four mosquito pools and one squirrel.

All ages are vulnerable to infection and should be educated about WNV prevention. However, most individuals who become infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Individuals 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms if infected. Recent data also indicates that those with diabetes or hypertension may be at greatest risk for developing serious symptoms.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Residents can reduce the risk of infection by taking precautions to prevent mosquito bites and to protect their health:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- While outdoors, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when it’s possible.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, Picaridin or IR3535 according to instructions.

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- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screen with tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding.
- Contact the local mosquito or vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

Additional precautions can be taken to stop the spread of WNV, which include reporting “green” standing water, such as ponds, or neglected swimming pools to the local Mosquito and Vector Control District at (530) 342-7350 or (530) 533-6038, and reporting dead birds and squirrels thought to be infected by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or visiting www.westnile.ca.gov. Residents can also track West Nile Virus activity in Butte County and neighboring counties on the website.

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Butte County Public Health Department

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community and environmental health.