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For Immediate Release
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September 2, 2011

**FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTION
IN BUTTE COUNTY THIS YEAR**

BUTTE COUNTY, California –Butte County Public Health Department received its first report this year of a Butte County resident testing positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection. According to Dr. Mark Lundberg, Health Officer for Butte County Public Health Department, “This case is the first confirmed human case of WNV in our county in 2011. It is an important reminder that WNV is still with us and everyone needs to protect themselves.”

The case is a middle-aged woman from Oroville. She was hospitalized with WNV infection and is now recovering at home. “This case reminds us that people of all ages can become ill from WNV,” stated Lundberg. “Everyone should take measures to protect themselves from mosquito bites.”

As of August 31, 2011, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reported WNV in 19 humans from 9 counties, with no fatalities. To date for 2011, Butte County has had no dead birds, mosquito samples, or other indications of WNV presence. Only two neighboring counties, Glenn and Sutter, have reported the presence of WNV this year. In Butte County last year, only 1 person was positive for WNV.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of a mosquito that has been infected by feeding on an infected bird. The risk of getting WNV through blood transfusions and organ transplants is very small (all donated blood is checked for WNV before being used), and should not prevent people from undergoing needed procedures. WNV cannot be passed from person to person through touching or kissing.

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Approximately 80 percent of the people who become infected will have no symptoms. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected will display symptoms, which can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Approximately 1 in 150 infected persons will develop severe illness. Symptoms of severe illness can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent. Persons over age 50 are at highest risk for severe illness or death.

Dr. Lundberg urged residents to take these steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and reduce their risk of WNV:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dusk and dawn.
- When outdoors at dusk or dawn, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, socks and shoes.
- Before going outdoors, apply insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, IR 3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding (standing water in buckets, flowerpots, old tires, gutters, water troughs, unused swimming pools, etc.)
- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

The public can become part of the state's monitoring effort for WNV by reporting any dead birds or tree squirrels on-line at www.westnile.ca.gov or to the toll-free line: 877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473). Not all dead squirrels or birds will be picked up for testing; however, ALL reports are used to help identify areas of increased WNV risk. While there is no evidence that people can get the virus from handling infected birds or squirrels, individuals should take precautions not to touch the animals when disposing of them.

For more information on WNV in California, including how to report and safely dispose of dead birds and tree squirrels, visit the CDPH website at <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/> or call 1-877-968-2473. Additional information is also available at the Butte County Public Health Department website at www.buttecounty.net/publichealth .

For further information:

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- Butte County Public Health Department 891-2732 (Chico), 538-7581 (Oroville)
www.buttecounty.net/publichealth
- Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control: Chico: 342-7350 Oroville: 533-6038
- Durham Mosquito Abatement District: 345-2875
- Oroville Abatement District: 534-8383
- California Department of Public Health: www.westnile.ca.gov/
- Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm

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