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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IDENTIFIED IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY
FOUR MORE MOSQUITO POOLS & FOUR MORE BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS
No Spraying Planned; Surveillance Increased**

The Westchester County Department of Health today received notification from the New York State Department of Health that an 83-year-old man from the Town of Mamaroneck has tested positive for West Nile virus. The man was reported to be recovering from his illness in the hospital. This is the first identified human case in Westchester County this year. No spraying is planned at this time.

In response to this finding, the Westchester County Department of Health will be conducting additional local environmental assessment including monitoring in the area of the man's home for potential mosquito breeding grounds, checking the status of larvicide in and around the Town of Mamaroneck, conducting additional mosquito trapping in the area, and developing detailed information about the travel history of the affected individual. A review of the Health Department's mosquito and bird surveillance data also is being conducted.

The Westchester County Department of Health today also reported that the New York State Department of Health has announced that from September 3 through September 5, 2002, there have been four additional mosquito pools and four more birds from Westchester County that have tested positive for West Nile Virus. The mosquito pools were collected in Yonkers, New Rochelle, Scarsdale and Mt. Vernon and the birds were found in Irvington, Mamaroneck Village, Hastings-on-Hudson, and New Rochelle. The mosquito pools and the four birds were collected between August 15, 2002 and August 28, 2002.

With the addition of these four new positive mosquito pools, a total of 23 mosquito pools from Westchester have tested positive for the virus this year. To date, out of 511 mosquito pools submitted for testing, 366 have been tested for West Nile virus, of which 343 have tested negative.

With the addition of these four birds, a total of 24 dead birds from Westchester have tested positive for the virus this year. To date, out of 2,768 dead birds reported to the Health Department and 160 submitted for testing, 103 birds

MORE

have been tested for West Nile virus, of which 79 have tested negative.

Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua Lipsman again urged residents to take personal protection measures against mosquito bites while in their homes and when spending time outdoors. "It is particularly important that residents remain vigilant in their efforts to reduce their risk of West Nile virus during the late summer months because this is peak mosquito season," said Dr. Lipsman. Dr. Lipsman recommends that residents take the following personal protection measures against mosquito bites

- Avoid being outdoors in places and during times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Use insect repellants with no more than 30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when outdoors in such areas at those times. Use 10% or less DEET for children. Do not use DEET on infants. Insect repellants should be used especially at dusk and evening hours when mosquitoes are most likely to bite. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors in areas and at times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

Mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile virus lay their eggs in stagnant water. The eggs can develop in any pool or puddle of water that stands undisturbed for more than four days. Mosquitoes will breed in any untreated water, so the County Health Department recommends doing the following around your home:

- Rid your property of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers
- Remove discarded tires
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are left outdoors
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly
- Sweep your driveway after it rains so that it is free of puddles
- Keep storm drains and gutters clear of leaves and debris
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs and drain water that collects on their covers.

Under County Executive Andy Spano's mosquito control program, *Operation Mosquito S.T.I.N.G.* (Stop The Insect's Next Generation), the County has applied larvicide to catch basins countywide to kill immature mosquitoes and have been collecting mosquitoes and dead birds for testing.

Since West Nile virus is in the area, it is important that residents take precautions against being bitten by mosquitoes and help to eliminate standing water in their neighborhoods that can serve as mosquito breeding sites. The Health Department is encouraging residents to report dead birds and large areas of standing water through its Public Health Information Line at (914) 813-5609 and through its internet site,

www.westchestergov.com/health.