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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LARVICIDE APPLICATION PROGRAM COMPLETED**

The Westchester County Department of Health has completed its application of larvicide briquettes to catch basins throughout the County, part of its effort to prevent the spread of the West Nile virus. The larvicide is used to prevent mosquito larvae in the catch basins from developing into adult mosquitoes that are capable of spreading West Nile virus to humans.

“I applaud the staff of the County Health Department who took on the very ambitious task of applying larvicide briquettes in municipal catch basins,” said County Executive Andrew Spano. “Last season we hired independent contractors to handle our larviciding needs. This time around, we decided that it would be more effective to have our own people do the job. I am pleased to say that we made the right call. This year’s larviciding program went without a hitch. The work was of the highest quality and was executed in an extremely efficient manner during the most effective time period for targeting mosquito larvae. The job was also completed ahead of schedule,” he added.

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“The staff who were involved in this project are now able to move on and deal with the other pressing summer health priorities that the Department handles,” said Joshua Lipsman, M.D., M.P.H., Westchester County Commissioner of Health. “These particular technicians are now available to perform their regular job duties which includes swimming pool inspections, the monitoring and testing of bathing beach water, conducting inspections of all the County’s summer camps, and handling food sanitation inspections of restaurants, mobile food units, frozen dessert manufacturers and vendors, and the numerous fairs that are held throughout the County. As importantly, the staff will be able to conduct more activities related to West Nile virus including monitoring of mosquito breeding and responding to complaints about standing water,” he added.

Beginning in mid-May, certified technicians from the Westchester County Department of Health began applying briquettes of the larvicide Altosid XR (methoprene) into County and municipal catch basins. Of the 57,879 catch basins countywide, a total of 54,540 were treated with larvicide. The remaining 3,239 were inspected but not treated for reasons such as the catch basin being void of a sump and having no place for water to collect; the sump or the entire catch basin being filled with sediment so water could not accumulate; or other similar factors that made the catch basin an unfit mosquito breeding ground. Orange dots have been marked on all catch basins to identify which have been treated and which have not. One orange dot indicates that the catch basin has been treated. Two orange dots signify that no treatment was necessary for that particular basin.

“Although the initial larviciding program has been successfully completed, residents are still encouraged to take preventive measures to help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds and avoid mosquito bites,” said Dr. Lipsman.

**To help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds:**

- Remove unnecessary water-holding containers, especially old tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles.
- Cover trash containers to keep out rain.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Clean roof gutters and remove standing water from flat roofs.
- Remove standing water from basements.
- Place a couple of capfuls of household bleach in a basement sump-pump pit if it has standing water.

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- Keep drains, culverts and streams clean of weeds and trash so that the water will drain properly.
- Make sure stored boat covers are completely drained. Store small boats upside down.
- Drain water in birdbaths, plant pots and drip trays twice a week.
- Keep grass cut short and trim shrubs to eliminate hiding places for adult mosquitoes.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs. Be sure rainwater does not collect on pool, spa or hot tub covers. Disinfect the cover with bleach to kill mosquito larvae and eggs.
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds.
- Fill in hollow tree stumps and rot holes that hold water with sand or concrete.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.

For more information about West Nile virus, visit the Health Department's website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health) or call the West Nile Virus Information Line at (914) 813-5609.