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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MOSQUITO CONTROL EFFORTS NECESSARY FOR SUMMER MONTHS
Elimination of Standing Water is a Priority**

With record amounts of rainfall over the past few weeks and the recent period of prolonged heat, Westchester County residents are being reminded to remain vigilant in their efforts to prevent West Nile virus.

“In order for our mosquito control program to be a success, we need the public to pitch in and do their part,” said County Executive Andy Spano. “In addition to our own efforts, we rely heavily on our residents to ensure that there are no places where mosquitoes can breed. Now that it is not raining, I encourage everyone to head outside and get rid of any standing water that has accumulated around their property.”

The County’s catch basin larviciding initiative to prevent mosquito larvae from developing into adult mosquitoes is in its final stages. Certified technicians from the Westchester County Department of Health have been applying briquettes of the larvicide Altosid (methoprene) into state, county and local municipal catch basins as part of its effort to prevent the spread of West Nile Virus.

Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Westchester County Commissioner of Health, urges residents to take preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites and to help eliminate mosquito breeding sites. “Standing water serves as a potential breeding ground for mosquitoes,” he said. “Mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile virus lay their eggs in stagnant water. The eggs can develop in any untreated pool or puddle of water that stands undisturbed for more than four days.”

West Nile virus is a disease carried by mosquitoes that can cause serious illness in humans and may even be fatal. To date this year, no human cases of West Nile virus have been reported in Westchester County.

The Health Department recommends the following to eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites around your property:

- Remove unnecessary water-holding containers, especially old tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles.
- Cover trash containers to keep out rain.

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- 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.
- 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.

The Westchester County Department of Health also encourages residents to report any standing water that cannot be easily eliminated. Residents have two ways they can report this important information to the Health Department: They can call the 24-hour Public Health Information Line at (914) 813-5609 or enter the information on forms provided on the Health Department's website at www.westchestergov.com/health.

In addition to removing standing water, Dr. Lipsman also 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.

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