

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2007

**FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS REPORTED
IN A WESTCHESTER COUNTY RESIDENT THIS YEAR**

The Westchester County Department of Health has been notified that a 34 year-old Yonkers resident has tested positive for West Nile virus, marking the first identified human case in a Westchester County resident this year. Although the individual is a resident of Westchester County, it is believed that the virus was not acquired locally due to the individual's recent travel history.

"Late last month, this individual traveled to the West Coast and spent a great deal of time outdoors, contracting multiple mosquito bites," said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health for Westchester County. "This individual became ill with headache and fever while still on vacation and was tested and treated for West Nile virus upon returning to Westchester County in the beginning of September."

"The Health Department has conducted a local environmental assessment of the area around the individual's home and has found no signs of mosquito breeding activity in the immediate vicinity," continued Dr. Lipsman. "In fact, mosquito activity overall has been quite low in Westchester County this season. Out of the 372 mosquito batches that have been tested in Westchester this year, only two have come back positive for West Nile virus. By this time last year, there had already been 20 positive mosquito batches identified," he said.

"In addition, it is also important to note that the volume of mosquitoes being collected from our traps this season has been consistently low as well, indicating that the mosquito population is lower this year," Dr. Lipsman continued. "Given the timeframe of this person's travel, onset of symptoms and the lack of significant West Nile activity in Westchester County compared to the Western U.S., it is more than likely that the individual contracted West Nile virus while vacationing on the West Coast."

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Even though mosquito control efforts have been successful in quelling the mosquito population thus far, Dr. Lipsman reminds residents that it is still important that everyone remain vigilant in your efforts to reduce your risk of West Nile virus. This is particularly important during the late summer and early fall because this has historically been peak mosquito season in Westchester County. The Health Department recommends that residents take the following personal protection measures against mosquito bites:

- Avoid outdoor activities 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.

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 it's important to do 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 from 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. Residents who notice large areas of standing water that could serve as potential mosquito breeding grounds should report this information to the Health Department through its Public Health Information Line at (914) 813-5609 or online through its internet site, www.westchestergov.com/health.