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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2002

**COUNTY EXECUTIVE SPANO ANNOUNCES TWO INITIATIVES
TO BATTLE WEST NILE VIRUS
New Website Reporting Feature Unveiled
Catch Basin Larviciding set to Begin May 20**

With mosquito season fast approaching, County Executive Andy Spano today announced two initiatives to aid Westchester in its fight against West Nile virus.

A new online feature for the public to report potential mosquito breeding sites and dead bird sightings has been added to the County's website and the County's catch basin larviciding program to prevent mosquito larvae from developing into adult mosquitoes is set to begin on May 20.

"It is important that County residents help us fight West Nile virus by eliminating potential mosquito breeding sites around their homes and neighborhoods and reporting the location of dead birds or standing water that is not easily eliminated," stated County Executive Andy Spano. "Residents now 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 the new forms provided on the website," said Spano.

The Health Department is not collecting any dead birds from residents for testing this year, however, it is still important that dead birds be reported for tracking purposes. This information is important to the county's effort in understanding and controlling West Nile virus. "Dead birds, especially crows, seem to be a good indication of the presence of West Nile virus in a community," stated Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health. "Residents who report information about dead birds are performing a valuable service, as this will provide us with vital tracking information," stated Dr. Lipsman.

MORE

Beginning on May 20, certified technicians from the Westchester County Department of Health will begin 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. Additionally, on a case-by-case basis, the control agents Vectolex CG, Vectobac G and Bactimos Briquettes may also be used.

Larviciding will begin with the municipal storm water catch basins in the northern area of the county and will proceed south until all of the county's municipal catch basins have been completed. A map of areas receiving larvicide treatment can be viewed at the offices of the Westchester County Health Department, 145 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle, N.Y. during the hours of 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

In addition to the larviciding program, County Executive Spano is encouraging residents to assist with mosquito control activities by taking preventive measures to help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds and avoid mosquito bites.

“On June 7 and 8, residents can participate in the second annual “Spring S.T.I.N.G. Clean-Up,” an organized effort to fight West Nile virus in Westchester County by ridding our communities of potential mosquito breeding sites,” said Spano. “The Spring S.T.I.N.G. Clean-Up event is a wonderful opportunity for residents to get involved and take pride in their communities while, at the same time, emphasizing the point that integrated pest management does work,” he added.

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 Health Department recommends doing the following around your home:

- 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.
- 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.

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- 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 or the Spring S.T.I.N.G Clean-Up, visit the Health Department's website at www.westchestergov.com/health or call the Health Department Information Line at (914) 813-5609.

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