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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: HOLLY GILLESPIE**  
**850-833-9240 x 378**

### **Dr. John O. Agwunobi Places Okaloosa County Under Medical Alert for Arboviral Diseases**

**Ft. Walton Beach** – Dr. John O. Agwunobi, Secretary for the Florida Department of Health, has issued a medical alert for all arboviral (mosquito-borne) diseases for Okaloosa County effective today because a human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) encephalitis has been confirmed in an 85-year-old female resident of Okaloosa County. This individual is at home recovering.

The OCHD continues to accept dead birds for the surveillance of WNV. The OCHD is following the same procedure as last year for dead bird submission. The dead birds need to be brought to either the Ft. Walton Beach or Crestview location of the Health Department for submission, but you must call the Health Department before bringing the bird in to determine if it is suitable for testing. Only birds that have died recently, are odorless, and that have no sign of insects or decay on the carcass are acceptable for testing.

The OCHD continues to advise the public to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These should include the “5 D’s” for prevention:

1. **Dusk and Dawn** – Avoid outdoor activities whenever possible between dusk and dawn.
2. **Dress** – If it is not possible to avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn, wear light colored, long sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes, and socks when outdoors.
3. **DEET** – Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin or DEET since mosquitoes may bite through clothing. Apply insect repellent sparingly to exposed skin. An effective repellent will contain 30 – 35% concentration DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). DEET in higher concentrations (greater than 35%) provides no additional protection. DEET at 30 – 35% concentration can be used on adolescents and adults. Young children should use 10% or less DEET products. Infants (less than 1 yr. of age) should NOT be sprayed with any DEET products and should avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn. Repellants may irritate the eyes and mouth, so avoid applying repellent to the hands and face of children. Whenever you use an insecticide or insect repellent, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer’s Directions for Use, as printed on the product.
4. **Drainage** - Avoid areas of standing or stagnant water where mosquitoes are usually most active. Eliminate areas of standing or stagnant water around your home and workplace. Even small amounts of standing water can breed mosquitoes. If you live in

an area which you believe needs to be sprayed for mosquitoes, please call Okaloosa County Mosquito Control at 651- 7394.

The Department of Health laboratories continue to provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of arboviral disease. These signs may include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. Physicians should contact the OCHD to submit serum and, if available, cerebrospinal fluid samples.

The Ft. Walton Beach Health Department is located at 221 NE Hospital Drive, Ft. Walton Beach, and the Crestview Health Department is located at 810 E. James Lee Blvd, Crestview. Please call the Health Department with any questions related to WNV at 833-9240 or 689-7808.

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