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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Okaloosa County Health Department Provides Update on West Nile Virus**

**Ft. Walton Beach** – Okaloosa County Health Department Director Karen Chapman announced that the Florida Department of Health has confirmed two additional human cases of West Nile Virus in Okaloosa County in a 54-year-old female and a 34-year-old female.

In addition, the State Department of Health Laboratory has confirmed that 12 birds that were submitted by Okaloosa County tested positive for West Nile Virus infection. The positive birds were 4 bluejays, 3 doves, 4 crows, and 1 house finch submitted from Shalimar, Niceville, Ft. Walton Beach, Crestview, and Baker residents.

Symptoms of West Nile virus may include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. Physicians should contact the Okaloosa County Health Department if they suspect an individual may meet the case definition for a mosquito-borne illness. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

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

- **Dusk and Dawn** (avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking a blood meal, for many species this is during the dusk and dawn hours)
- **Dress** (wear clothing that covers skin)
- **DEET** (use mosquito repellents including DEET [N, N diethyl-*m*-toluamide]. Follow manufacturer’s guidelines for proper use.
- **Drainage** (check your home to rid it of standing water in which mosquitoes can lay their eggs)

Elimination of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention.

#### **Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites**

Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.

Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain.

Turn over or remove empty plastic pots.

Pick up all beverage containers and cups.

Check tarps on boats or other equipment that may collect water.

Pump out bilges on boats.

Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week.

Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week.

Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.

DOH continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile (WN) virus, Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria, and dengue. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds by calling the West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-888-880-5782, or via the Web site <http://www.wildflorida.org/bird>. For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit DOH's Environmental Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/hsee/arbo/index.htm>.

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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