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FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS CONFIRMED

Sarasota County Health Department Administrator, Bill Little, announced today that a human case of West Nile (WN) virus encephalitis/fever in a 63-year-old male resident of Sarasota County was confirmed by DOH laboratory. This individual does have a history of travel outside of Sarasota County.

The risk of illness is small; less than one percent of people infected become severely ill with West Nile encephalitis or meningitis. Symptoms of WNV may include fever, headache, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. It may also cause muscle weakness. People 50 years of age and older tend to be more severely affected by the disease. Throughout the country last year there were over 4000 cases and 284 deaths. Physicians should contact the Sarasota County Health Department if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

Sarasota County Health Department and Florida Department of Health officials continue 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 blood, for many species this is during the dusk and dawn hours.
- **Dress** -- Wear clothing that covers skin.
- **DEET** -- When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide) are recommended. Products with concentrations up to 30% DEET are generally recommended for most situations. (It is not recommended to use DEET on children less than 2 months old. Instead, infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting used over carriers when mosquitoes are present). If additional protection is necessary, apply a repellent containing permethrin to your clothing. Always follow the manufacturer's directions.
- **Drainage** -- Check your yard to rid it of standing water and empty water-holding containers, once a week to prevent development of mosquito larvae.

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.



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The Florida Department of Health (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 via the Web site <http://www.wildflorida.org/bird> or by calling their local county health department.

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>, call the West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-888-880-5782, or your local county health department.

To report a mosquito problem, call Sarasota County Mosquito Management Services at 861-9740 or log on to Mosquito Management's website at <http://scgov.net> and click on health to find out when and where there will be spraying for the flying, biting adult mosquitoes. Call 861-9740, then press the number "2" to hear a message that says where spraying is planned.

Health care providers should report a suspected West Nile Virus case to the Communicable Disease Control office of the Sarasota County Health Department at 861-2873.

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