

August 29, 2001

Dear Colleagues:

The Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology conducts surveillance and investigation of mosquito-borne diseases including Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile (WN) in cooperation with county health departments. Health officials have issued medical alerts for a large number of Florida counties. To date there have been two confirmed human cases of EEE and four confirmed cases of WNV.

Human surveillance for arboviral encephalitis is extremely important for prevention and control. Health care providers and laboratories are required to report all suspect and confirmed cases of encephalitis and meningitis to their county health department (Florida Statute 381). As a service to health care providers, the Department of Health Laboratory offers free arbovirus (e.g., EEE, WN, dengue and St. Louis Encephalitis) testing for patients with clinical manifestations of these diseases.

If you know of a case of suspected viral encephalitis or viral meningitis, please report it immediately to your county health department or the Bureau of Epidemiology.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would share this information with your medical staff as well as other pertinent staff, in an effort to provide better health care to the citizens and visitors to Florida.

For more information on mosquito-borne encephalitis, including reporting human cases, visit the DOH Bureau of Epidemiology's Arboviral Encephalitis and West Nile Virus website at MyFlorida.com (<http://www.myflorida.com>), click on quick topics, then West Nile or call the Bureau's hotline at 1-888-880-5782 for recorded information. If you have questions concerning mosquito-borne diseases or reporting requirements you can contact your county health department for consultation or the Bureau of Epidemiology at (850) 245-4401.

Sincerely,

Steve Wiersma, M.D., M.P.H.  
Acting Chief, Bureau Epidemiology and  
State Epidemiologist

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