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**MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE FIRST POSITIVE
WEST NILE VIRUS MOSQUITO POOL**

DPH reminds residents of summer mosquito safety tips.

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts for the first time this year. The mosquito sample was collected on June 27 in the city of Worcester.

In 2007, there were six human cases of WNV, two of these cases resided in Worcester. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.

“Mosquitoes can carry disease. We want residents to take some simple steps to protect themselves this holiday weekend and throughout the summer months,” said DPH State Epidemiologist, Dr. Al DeMaria. “The recent rains and hot weather have increased mosquito populations. Now it is most important to take action to help reduce mosquito populations around your home and neighborhood and to make personal precautions a habit.”

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

Avoid Mosquito Bites:

- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours.** The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing.
- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
- **Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors.** Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 (as contained in Skin-So-Soft Bug Guard Plus IR3535®) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should

(more)

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not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water.** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.
- **Install or Repair Screens.** Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Report Dead Birds

- **Dead crows, blue jays or robins** may be a sign that WNV is circulating among the birds and mosquitoes in an area. Call 1-866-MASS WNV to report a dead bird. By reporting dead birds, you can play an important role in monitoring WNV.

More information is available on the DPH website: www.mass.gov/dph/wnv/wnv1.htm. Information about WNV and EEE is also available by calling the DPH recorded information line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7698), or the Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

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