



Kane County Health Department

1330 N Highland Avenue
Aurora, IL 60506
Phone (630) 897-1124
Fax (630) 264-7654

1240 N Highland Avenue
Aurora, IL, 60506
Phone (630) 208-3801
Fax (630)-208-5147

76 S Grove Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120
Phone (847) 608-2850
Fax (847) 888-6458

113 S Grove Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120
Phone (847) 695-0848
Fax (847) 695-0988

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORTS COUNTY'S FIRST WEST NILE VIRUS CASE

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CONTACT: Cindy Gross
Epidemiologist
Kane County Health Dept.
(630)-232-5891

Kane County Health Department announced today that a 51 year old Elgin woman is the first Kane County resident and 24th Illinois resident to be diagnosed with human West Nile Virus disease this year. In 2003 no human cases were identified in Kane County and a total of 54 including one death were reported in Illinois. In 2002 Illinois led the nation with 884 cases, 64 deaths. Nine of those cases including 1 death occurred in Kane County.

Kane County's first 2004 case became ill in early August with headache and fever. Laboratory testing performed at a private laboratory in mid August indicated West Nile Virus infection. Confirmatory testing results reported today by the Illinois Department of Public Health Laboratory in Chicago confirmed this diagnosis. This individual was not hospitalized, continues to recover and is classified as West Nile Virus fever.

Cindy Gross, Epidemiologist stated "The announcement of Kane County's first human case underscores the importance of the community to continue to take precautions to prevent exposure to West Nile Virus until the first killing frost. According to Fred Carlson, Environmental Health Division Director, the Health Department's West Nile Virus surveillance program that has been underway since the beginning of June, has identified 10 birds (7 crows and 3 blue jays) as well as 10 mosquito pools positive for WNV. "The virus is definitely present in Kane County" states Mr. Carlson.

Residents should take the follow precautions to reduce their risk:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on young children.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.

WNV is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness, but some may become ill three to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

Only about two persons out of 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness. Illness from West Nile is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis, and death are possible. Persons over 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the Health Department's Web site at www.kanehealth.com or by calling the Health Department at 630-208-3801.