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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Health District Reports First Human Case of WNV

The Central Connecticut Health District received notification from the Connecticut Department of Public Health that the first human case of West Nile Virus has been reported in Wethersfield. For the past several years, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) has been trapping and collecting mosquitoes for testing from approximately 91 trap sites in 72 municipalities around the state. Two of those sites are located within the Central Connecticut Health District, one in Newington and the other in Wethersfield, where both sites have reported that West Nile Virus positive mosquitoes have been trapped.

Although there is no cure, the symptoms of West Nile Virus can be treated. Symptoms may occur 3-14 days after being bitten by the infected mosquito and may include: slight fever, body aches, headache, rash and conjunctivitis, and can be relieved with over-the-counter medications. However, anyone experiencing a high fever, stiff neck severe headache, disorientation, vision loss, numbness or muscle weakness should consult a doctor, because serious infections can result in neurological disease and even death. Those individuals at risk for developing a severe illness include the elderly, the very young, and those with compromised immune systems.

Like West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a rare disease that is caused by a virus that is spread by infected mosquitoes. Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus (EEEV) is one group of mosquito-transmitted viruses that can cause inflammation of the brain. Symptoms may occur 4-10 days after being bitten and 1/3 of people die. There are two types of illness that occur, systemic and encephalitic. Systemic illness is abrupt and causes chills, fever, malaise, joint pain, muscle pain and the illness can last 1-2 weeks. Encephalitic illness is characterized with abrupt onset, especially in infants, as it is more severe with symptoms such as fever, headache, irritability, restlessness, drowsiness, anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea, cyanosis, convulsions and even coma. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the type of illness will depend on the age of the person. EEE transmission is most common in and around freshwater hardwood swamps. Individuals who are most at risk include people who engage in outdoor work or recreational areas that are located in swampy, outdoor areas.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, the public should use the following personal protection measures:

- Avoid outdoor activities one hour before and one hour after dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors; it is especially important to cover the arms and legs of children.
- No product containing DEET should be used on infants less than two months old.
- Cover babies' playpens and carriages with mosquito netting when outdoors.
- Avoid camping near fresh water swamps and use mosquito netting in tents.
- Stay indoors when mosquitoes are numerous.
- Eliminate sources of standing water such as stagnant ponds, ditches, flower pots and old tires, as

mosquitoes only need a few tablespoons of water to lay eggs. Drain children's pools, clean clogged gutters, and flush birdbaths and fountains once or twice a week. Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers and any similar containers that have accumulated on your property, and drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are left outside.

- Make sure your property is graded properly and has adequate drainage. Look for places where rainwater collects and fill all holes and depressions. Mosquitoes will breed in any puddle that lasts for more than 4 days.
- Store boats, wheelbarrows, and containers upside down. If you have a pond, be sure it is aerated or stocked with fish such as goldfish or minnows, which eat mosquito larvae.
- Patch holes in screens and make sure screens are tightly attached to doors and windows.
- Use low toxicity insecticides and always follow the directions on the products. When applying sprays, be sure to keep the wind at your back, carry the spray away from you and avoid personal contact with it and excessive inhalation of spray materials.
- Place bat houses on your property.

Anyone with questions or concerns about mosquito control, WNV, EEE or any public health issue may contact the Central Connecticut Health District, serving the towns of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield at www.ccthd.org or by calling (860)721-2822.

Additional information about mosquito control can be obtained from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) at www.ct.gov/mosquito or at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station at www.ct.gov.caes. Inquiries about pesticide-related subjects are handled through the National Pesticide Information Center at 1-800-858-7378.