



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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## STATE HEALTH DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES FIRST CONFIRMED HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN CALIFORNIA THIS YEAR

SACRAMENTO - A 47-year-old Tulare County man has been infected with West Nile Virus (WNV), the first reported human case in California this year, State Health Director Sandra Shewry announced today. The man sought medical care for fever and headache in early June and is recovering.

“With the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus this year in California, I strongly encourage the public to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites,” Shewry said. “Significant mosquito activity is expected this summer due to a mild winter, excessive rainfall and warm temperatures.”

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s revised budget includes a new one-time \$12 million funding augmentation to supplement existing mosquito control programs. “Mosquito control is the state’s best defense to protect Californians from West Nile virus,” Shewry said.

Tests conducted by the Public Health Laboratory in Tulare County and the California Department of Health Services’ Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory in Richmond confirmed the WNV result.

So far this year, WNV has been detected in 34 of California’s 58 counties in 258 dead birds, 41 mosquitoes, four sentinel chickens and three horses. In 2004, a total of 830 human WNV infections, including 28 deaths, were reported in California. WNV was also detected in all counties last year and is expected to spread throughout the state again this year.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Health officials emphasized that the risk of serious illness to humans is low. Most individuals who are infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Elderly individuals and those with compromised immune systems are at greatest risk for serious illness.

The most effective ways for individuals to prevent WNV are:

- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, according to label instructions.
- Ensure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding.

For more information about WNV, visit [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov). Dead birds can be reported on the Web site or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473).