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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Two Cases of West Nile Virus Confirmed in Ventura County

[Ventura County, CA] – Ventura County Public Health Officer, Dr. Robert Levin, announced today two confirmed cases of West Nile virus (WNV); one of them passed away from complications from the virus last Thursday. Both Ventura County residents are from Simi Valley.

WNV is influenced by many factors such as climate, the number and types of birds and mosquitoes in an area, and the level of immunity in birds to WNV. It is possible that the drought has contributed to WNV amplification by reducing sources of water for birds and mosquitoes. As birds and mosquitoes seek water, they are coming into closer contact with humans and amplifying the transmission of the virus.

Forty California counties have reported WNV activity so far this year for a total of 311 cases in humans. The median age of cases throughout the State is 57 years with 59% of them being in males.

“WNV is transmitted to humans and animals by the bite of an infected mosquito. The risk of serious illness to most people is low. However, some individuals – less than one percent – can develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis,” says Dr. Levin.

People 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop complications. Studies also indicate that those with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greatest risk for serious illness.

The California Department of Public Health recommends that individuals prevent exposure to mosquito bites and WNV by practicing the “Three Ds”:

DEET – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you. DEET can be used safely on infants and children two months of age and older.

DAWN AND DUSK – Mosquitoes bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear proper clothing and repellent if outside during these times. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.

DRAIN – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, by emptying flower pots, old car tires, buckets, and other containers. If you know of a swimming pool that is not being properly maintained, please contact your local mosquito and vector control agency.



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California's West Nile virus website includes the latest information on WNV activity in the state. Californians are encouraged to report dead birds on the website or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473)

The Ventura County Environmental Health Division monitors and controls mosquito breeding sources throughout Ventura County. All mosquito sources near areas of reported WNV activity are inspected and will be treated if necessary. To report any potential mosquito breeding sources in Ventura County, the public can call the mosquito complaint HOTLINE at 805/658-4310.