



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 18, 2014

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## **First Human West Nile Virus Positive Case in Illinois For 2014**

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has confirmed the first human West Nile virus case reported in Illinois for 2014. The Chicago Department of Public Health reported a woman in her 70's became ill in July.

"This first human case is a good reminder that we all need to take precautions," said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. "The mosquitoes that typically carry West Nile virus, commonly called the house mosquito, are not as noticeable as the swarms of floodwater mosquitoes we see with the heavy rains. Even if it does not look like there are a lot of mosquitoes outdoors, house mosquitoes are stealthy biters so make sure to use insect repellent when you're outside."

A bird collected in Henry County on May 29, 2014 and a mosquito sample collected in Madison County on May 30, 2014 were the first West Nile virus positive results this year. To date, West Nile virus has been reported in birds, mosquitoes and/or human case in 32 counties. At this time last, year, West Nile virus was reported in 49 counties.

In 2013, a total of 76 counties in Illinois reported West Nile virus. Last year there were 117 human cases, including 11 deaths.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common West Nile virus symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

The best way to prevent West Nile disease or any other mosquito-borne illness is to

reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** exposure - avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
  - Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
  - Eliminate all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** - In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report dead birds and areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health’s website at [www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm). Surveillance numbers are updated every Wednesday afternoon <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvsurveillance14.htm>.

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IDPH continues to implement its [Five Year Strategy 2014-2018](http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/StrategicPlan_Final_2014-2018.pdf) to maximize IDPH’s effectiveness, influence and value for promoting wellness, health equity, safety and improved health outcomes. Strategic plan priorities include developing and expanding partnerships; improving data utilization; reducing health disparities; improving regulatory compliance; and branding, marketing and communicating IDPH’s value.

[http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/StrategicPlan\\_Final\\_2014-2018.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/StrategicPlan_Final_2014-2018.pdf)

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