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EEE Found in Northeastern Massachusetts

Health officials remind residents to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

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BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today that Eastern Equine Encephalitis has been found in mosquitoes in the town of Merrimac in Essex County. This is the first time that EEE infected mosquitoes have been found in the northeast corner of the state this season. This finding follows last week's announcement that an alpaca from Candia, in southeastern New Hampshire, had tested positive for the disease.

“Southeastern Massachusetts is certainly our historical hotspot for EEE virus”, said DPH State Epidemiologist Dr. Al DeMaria “In recent years, however, we have seen increasing activity in Essex county; activity which has been concentrated in the towns along the New Hampshire border. We should be careful not to think of this disease as restricted to only one area.”

There was one human case of EEE during 2008; however there were 13 cases with 6 deaths from 2004 through 2006. EEE is usually spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE is a serious disease in all ages and can even cause death.

WNV positive mosquito results from 2009 can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at www.westnile.ashtonweb.com.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours.** The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.
- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
- **Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors.** Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535

according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus

- should not be used on children under three years of age.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters

- and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows

- and doors.

More information is available on the DPH website: www.mass.gov/dph/wnv. Information about West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis is also available by calling the DPH recorded information line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7968), or the Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

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