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July 20, 2009 - For immediate release:

First EEE Positive Mosquito Sample Identified in 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 detected in a mosquito sample in Massachusetts for the first time this year. The EEE sample was confirmed today by the Hinton State Laboratory Institute. The mosquito sample was collected on July 16, in the town of Freetown, located in Bristol County.

There have been no human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) or Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) identified so far this year.

In 2008, There was one human case of EEE; 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 for all ages and can even cause death.

"Today is the first reminder that EEE is circulating in our environment" said DPH State Epidemiologist, Dr. Al DeMaria "Southeastern Massachusetts has historically borne the brunt of EEE, although the northeast corner along the New Hampshire border has emerged as a concern in recent years. But EEE isn't confined to those areas, and people shouldn't make the mistake of believing that it is."

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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