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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Confirmed in Lee County - Fight The Bite! -

Fort Myers, FL – The Lee County Health Department (LCHD) announces a 69-year old male from South Ft. Myers (Iona area) has been confirmed to have West Nile Virus (WNV) by the state laboratory. WNV is a mosquito-borne disease that causes mild to severe illness and first reached Florida in 2001.

Lee County Mosquito Control is actively monitoring and spraying the effected area. People who are concerned about excessive mosquito activity in their neighborhood should contact Lee County Mosquito Control at 694-2174.

Many people that become ill have mild symptoms including headache, fever, dizziness, and fatigue, but severe neurological symptoms are also possible. Although mosquito borne diseases can cause serious illnesses and even death in people of any age, children and those over 50 are at greatest risk for severe disease. Symptoms typically appear between 3 and 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

In Florida, WNV activity has been identified in all 67 counties and peaked in 2003. There have been a total of 239 cases of WNV in Florida and 6 cases in Lee County since 2001. In recent years, there has been a decreased level of activity, possibly due to drought-like conditions throughout much of the state. Most WNV infections (approximately 80%) are asymptomatic.

Anyone with symptoms of fever, headache, confusion or stiff neck should contact their physician or emergency department. Physicians should contact the LCHD if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne diseases.

For more information on mosquito borne illnesses:

FDOH Web site at www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html,

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov

Lee County Mosquito Control District Web site at www.lcmcd.org

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Tips to Avoid Mosquito Bites is the Best Way to Prevent Disease:

Lee County's Health Department & Mosquito Control District recommends remembering the 5 D's:

- **Dusk and Dawn** – Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood.
- **Dress** – Wear clothing that covers most of your skin.
- **DEET** – When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing up to 30 percent DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) are recommended. Other effective mosquito repellents include picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535.
- **Drainage** – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, where mosquitoes lay eggs.

Tips on Repellent Use

- Always read label directions carefully for the approved usage before applying a repellent. Some
- In protecting children, read label instructions to be sure the repellent is appropriate. DEET is not recommended on children younger than 2 months old. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children less than 3 years old.
- Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when outside.
- Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children. Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin or onto clothing, but not under clothing. Do not apply repellent to the eyes or mouth, cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to clothing or gear.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

- Remove water in old tires, buckets, garbage cans, and other containers where water collects.
- Check clogged gutters and flat roofs that may have poor drainage.
- Fill in holes or dips in the ground that collect water. Level the ground around your home so water can run off.
- Empty birdbaths, water bowls, plant pots, and wading pools once or twice a week.
- Store boats upside down or with a cover

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