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DPH CAUTIONS STATE RESIDENTS TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID MOSQUITOES

EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS (EEE) CARRYING MOSQUITOS IDENTIFIED IN 7 SOUTHEASTERN TOWNS THIS WEEK.

Hartford, CT – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is advising Connecticut residents to protect themselves and their children from mosquitoes to reduce the chance of contracting eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus.

Mosquitoes trapped in 7 towns, primarily located in the southeastern part of the state, have tested positive for EEE virus this week. Towns include Chester, Haddam, Hampton, Killingworth, North Stonington, Stonington, and Voluntown. Some of the mosquito species that tested positive for the virus are known to bite people and horses. This season, two cases of EEE virus infection have been reported in horses. No human infections of EEE virus have been identified.

"No human cases of EEE have been reported in Connecticut since 2013," cautioned DPH Commissioner Renée Coleman Mitchell, "however, it is important for all Connecticut residents, especially in the southeastern part of the state, to take recommended precautions to avoid mosquito bites seriously."

EEE is a serious but rare illness caused by a virus that is transmitted by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can only acquire the virus by feeding on infected wild birds. In most years, the virus is found only in species of mosquitoes which feed on birds, but occasionally the virus can be passed on to other mosquito species known to bite people and horses. The virus cannot be passed from person to person or from horses to humans. The risk of mosquito-transmitted diseases such as EEE virus usually increases through the late summer and early fall. Mosquitoes are active until the first heavy frost.

Infection with EEE virus can cause serious illness affecting the brain. Symptoms include high fever, headache, stiff neck and decreased consciousness. The disease is fatal in 25-50% of cases and many of those who recover experience lasting health problems. Individuals with symptoms suggestive of EEE infection should contact their physician immediately. No human vaccine

against EEE virus infection or specific antiviral treatment for clinical EEE virus infections is available.

"We are not suggesting that people stop enjoying outdoor activities," said DPH Commissioner Renée Coleman Mitchell "but people should take extra precautions to protect their health."

Residents are advised to protect themselves and their children by minimizing outdoor activity from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active. If outdoor activity is unavoidable, all personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites should be taken.

The most effective way to prevent infection from EEE virus is to prevent mosquito bites. Use insect repellent, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants, treat clothing and gear, and take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors.

For more information about EEE prevention, visit this CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/eas/nequineencephalitis/gen/pre.html>

For the latest mosquito test results, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program web site at <https://portal.ct.gov/mosquito>