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PRESS RELEASE

June 8, 2016; media calls to (630) 221-7374

Early reports of West Nile activity prompt Health Department advisory

DUPAGE COUNTY—Reports of two mosquito batches testing positive for the presence of West Nile virus (WNV) have prompted the DuPage County Health Department to encourage county residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites and the risk of contracting WNV.

The Health Department launched its countywide WNV surveillance program recently and already found two positive reports from mosquitoes trapped in the Carol Stream and Aurora areas. These early reports of WNV activity are in line with similar early reports of WNV activity elsewhere in Illinois from the Illinois Department of Public Health

The Health Department is again using the Personal Protection Index (PPI) widget on its website, which is an easy-to-understand alert system that informs the public about the risk of contracting WNV, as well as the steps that should be taken to protect themselves and their families.

Residents may also report dead birds using a simple form on the Health Department's website:

<http://www.dupagehealth.org/dead-bird-sighting>. Dead birds can often be an early sign of the presence of the virus in the environment.

The PPI widget provides residents with a real-time snapshot of WNV activity in the county, which ranges from zero to three, zero meaning there is no risk and three announcing a high level of risk with multiple confirmed human cases of WNV. The widget is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Residents will be able to see the PPI widget by visiting the Health Department's website.

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Many community partners including townships, municipalities and park districts, also have the PPI widget posted to their homepages. Residents who click on the widget will be linked to the Health Department's "Fight the Bite" page for prevention tips.

The prevention tips are based on the "4 Ds of Defense," which include **draining** standing water, using insect repellent to **defend** yourself, **dressing** with long sleeves to cover your skin and being careful during the **day and after dark**.

The Health Department monitors WNV activity by collecting and testing mosquitoes in traps located throughout the county. The PPI widget will be updated by 3 p.m. each Wednesday throughout the WNV season. These weekly updates will be determined by the Health Department's vector-borne disease surveillance experts.

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