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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First human West Nile Virus illness of 2019 confirmed in Sarpy County

The Sarpy/Cass Health Department has identified the first case of human West Nile Virus infection in Sarpy County for the 2019 season. The individual is under 40 years of age and was not hospitalized. Typically, the Health Department sees an average of four WNV cases per year. However, in 2018, they investigated a total of 42 cases.

“This is our first case of West Nile Virus this year, and it is important for individuals to know how to protect themselves from getting sick and the best way to do that is to avoid mosquito bites” said Health Director Sarah Schram.

West Nile virus is a disease that is transmitted to people through the bite of infected mosquitoes. In Nebraska, most infections occur from June through September. The Health Department offers a few tips to protect yourself from WNV and all mosquito-borne diseases:

- Limit outdoor activity during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Reduce the amount of exposed skin by wearing long sleeved shirts and pants and cover infant strollers, cribs, and baby carriers with nets.
- Cover exposed skin with an EPA-approved insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors. Use air conditioning, if you have it.
- Empty standing water from items outside your home such as flowerpots, buckets, and kiddie pools.

Most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms; however, symptoms can include headache, fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, and rash.

Anyone with questions about WNV should contact their primary health care provider or visit the Health Department website www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org

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