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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health Dept reports 1st human case of West Nile virus

WOODSTOCK IL – McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) has confirmed its first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) this year in a 71 year old man from Marengo that was hospitalized but has since been released. Human WNV cases were previously reported in McHenry County in 2007 (5), 2006 (6) and 2005 (3) during the months of August, September and October. The State Health Department has recorded 5 cases in 2010 in DuPage, Cook and Kane Counties. This year, no positive mosquito pools or birds have tested positive for WNV in the County.

Most people with the virus have mild symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches. Illness can occur 3-15 days after an infected mosquito bite. More serious illnesses, such as encephalitis and meningitis and death, are possible. The disease can affect all ages, but people over the age of 50 and those with chronic disease.

Mosquitoes transmit the virus to humans after feeding on a bird infected with WNV. Public health officials continue to urge residents to take precautions as the risk of mosquito-borne WNV lasts until the first hard frost. The most effective way to prevent against becoming infected with WNV is to follow some basic steps:

- Limit your time outdoors during peak mosquito biting hours which are from dusk to dawn
- When outside (evening and early morning), use repellent and protective clothing such as long-sleeves, long pants and socks.
- Spray clothes with repellent containing DEET for extra protection. Always follow label directions.
- Get rid of standing water around your home where mosquitoes will breed (bird baths, old tires, garbage cans, flower pot trays, wheelbarrows).
- Have tight-fitting screens on both windows and doors; replace screens with tears.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the MCDH website www.mcdh.info and at Illinois Dept of Public Health <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvgenpublic.htm> .

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“Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966.”