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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: All Media
From: Joel Strasz, Public Health Officer – Bay County Health Department
Date: August 31, 2023
Re: **Prevent Mosquito-Borne Illness: West Nile Virus detected in Bay County**

BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN – West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in a blood donation from a resident of Bay County. This is a confirmed, non-neuroinvasive case due to the person experiencing symptoms. In response, enhanced control efforts will take place by Bay County Mosquito Control to reduce mosquito populations in the area.

Routine screening for WNV in blood donations helps ensure the safety of the blood supply in Michigan and in the U.S. Donations that test positive for WNV do not enter the blood supply.

Residents are reminded that the best way to protect against WNV and other mosquito-borne illnesses such as Jamestown Canyon virus (JCV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus is to prevent mosquito bites. Earlier in the season, mosquito pools tested in Bay and Saginaw counties tested positive for EEE, WNV, and JCV.

WNV is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people who contract the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness, but some may become ill 3-15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Symptoms of infection, like WNV, typically include a high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, and a severe headache. More serious complications include neurological illnesses, such as meningitis and encephalitis.

“We want to remind residents that mosquito season is not over and it only takes one bite from an infected mosquito to cause the illness,” says Joel Strasz, Health Officer from the Bay County Health Department, “Take precautions until the first frost by using insect repellent and wearing long-sleeve shirts and long pants when outside when mosquitoes are active.”

Mosquito bite prevention tips:

- Use insect repellent containing the active ingredient DEET and follow label instructions. To find a repellent that is right for you, visit the EPA’s website: <https://tinyurl.com/4abvert8>
- Wear long sleeves, shoes, and socks when outdoors
- Repair screens to keep mosquitoes out of your home. Use air conditioning, if possible.
- Empty standing water from around your home regularly. Standing water can be found in flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths

The Bay County Health Department protects and promotes a healthy community and safe environment by providing quality services through all stages of life. Local public health information and updates are available at baycounty-mi.gov/health and on our social media channels (@BayCountyHD).

If you have any questions, please contact the Bay County Health Department at (989) 895-4009, Monday through Friday, 8am-5pm.

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