



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

For Immediate Release

April 30, 2010

News media calls to Vic Reato: Media Services Manager at (815)727-5088.

Agency Website: www.willcountyhealth.org

Twitter: WillCoHealth

HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO ACTIVATE WNV INFORMATION LINE

JOLIET – May marks the beginning of the West Nile Virus (WNV) season across Illinois. County residents can help to minimize the potential for WNV by reporting dead birds to the Will County Health Department. Will County's WNV Information Line is available beginning May 1, for individuals wishing to report dead birds that can help identify the potential for human infections. The 24-hour service is accessible at 815-740-7631.

Launched in May, 2002, the Information Line enables area residents to access the latest information concerning WNV, report the location of dead birds, and talk to a Health Department representative about the disease during regular weekly business hours. Will County Environmental Health uses dead bird reports to monitor potential WNV hot spots and identify other possible trends requiring Health Department intervention.

Adult crows and blue jays have long been testing priorities, but the Illinois Department of Public Health will accept multiple bird species for laboratory analysis. Other birds suitable for testing include: robins, finches, grackles, sparrows, wrens, swallows, and cardinals.

"WNV poses potential health risks for everyone," according to Will County Environmental Health Director Elizabeth Bilotta. "We are interested in the location of dead birds because that information is one way we are able to assess the potential for local virus activity. Dead bird monitoring and testing is a critical part of the statewide WNV surveillance initiative."

The Health Department will collect a limited number of reported dead birds and submit them to the state for analysis. You can view pictures of bird testing priorities by visiting the Environmental Health page at www.willcountyhealth.org.

WNV is a mosquito-borne disease capable of producing encephalitis and meningitis, potentially fatal inflammations of the brain and spinal chord. Residents can minimize personal risk by avoiding outdoor activity at dusk and near dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Main Office
501 Ella Avenue
Joliet, IL 60433
Ph 815.727.8480
Fx 815.727.8484

Community Health Center
1106 Neal Avenue
Joliet, IL 60433
Ph 815.727.8670
Fx 815.727.8852

Eastern Branch Office
44 Towncenter
University Park, IL 60466
Ph 815.727.8803
Ph 708.534.0800
Fx 708.534.3455

Northern Branch Office
323 Quadrangle Dr.
Bolingbrook, IL 60440
Ph 630.679.7000
Fx 630.679.7015

Wearing light-colored long sleeves and eliminating potential mosquito breeding sites on your property can also reduce personal risk. Residents are also advised to use insect repellent containing DEET, or other chemical compounds that deter mosquitoes when spending time outdoors.

There were 663 human WNV cases and 30 fatalities reported nationally during 2009. Fatalities were reported in 14 states.

Illinois has reported 1,591 cumulative WNV human infections and 99 fatalities since 2002. The state totals include 52 Will County cases and two local fatalities.

For more information about WNV, visit www.idph.state.il.us, or www.cdc.gov.