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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDICAL ADVISORY ISSUED FOR NASSAU COUNTY
for
Mosquito-Borne Illness: West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine
Encephalitis

Fernandina: Nassau County Health Department Director/Administrator, Eugenia Ngo-Seidel, M.D., M.P.H., has issued a **medical advisory for Mosquito-borne illness in Nassau County**. This is based on Nassau County Health Department's arbovirus surveillance data for West Nile (WN) virus, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). **Persons should remain diligent in protecting themselves from mosquito bites.**

The Nassau County Health Department monitors weekly testing of sentinel chicken flocks placed throughout the county for evidence of WN and other mosquito-borne illness. **This past week, several chickens have tested positive for the West Nile (WN) virus.** Sentinel chickens have been positive for other mosquito borne illness, as EEE and Highlands J (HJ) this year. However, EEE tends to infect horses and very rarely humans; HJ chiefly affects birds, and is not known to cause illness in humans.

So far this year, there have been 14 human cases of West Nile virus in Florida, all on the west coast of Florida. No human cases of West Nile virus have ever been reported in Nassau County. Other counties in Florida under medical alerts for mosquito borne illnesses are Gadsden, Leon, Pasco, Polk, Pinellas, and Suwannee. Hillsborough is under a medical advisory.

Physicians should contact the Nassau County Health Department if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

DOH continues to advise the public to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These should include the **"5 D's" for prevention:**

- **Dusk and Dawn** -- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood, for many species this is during the dusk and dawn hours.
- **Dress** -- Wear clothing that covers skin.
- **DEET** -- When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, or N, N-diethyl-3-

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methylbenzamide) are recommended. Products with concentrations up to 30% DEET are generally recommended for most situations. (It is not recommended to use DEET on children less than 2 months old. Instead, infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting used over carriers when mosquitoes are present). If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Always read the manufacturer's directions carefully before you put on a repellent. Picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are other repellent options.

- **Drainage** -- Check your home to rid it of standing water in which mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

Elimination of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.

Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain.

Turn over or remove empty plastic pots.

Pick up all beverage containers and cups.

Check tarps on boats or other equipment that may collect water.

Pump out bilges on boats.

Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week.

Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week.

Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.

DOH continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile (WN) virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria, and dengue. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the Web site <http://myfwc.com/bird/> .

For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit DOH's Environmental Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/arboviral/index.htm>, call the West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-888-880-5782, or the Nassau County Health Department, Public Information, (904) 548-1800, extension 5202 or 5204.