For more information contact:

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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Local Health Dept.

Phone: 304-xxx-xxxx Fax: 304-xxx-xxxx

**For immediate release**

**West Nile and La Crosse Encephalitis season is upon us**

The {Insert County Health Department} and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health (BPH), are gearing up for another season of mosquitoes and the potential return of West Nile virus and La Crosse encephalitis.

Infection with West Nile virus and La Crosse encephalitis occurs primarily in the

summer and fall, so the time to take action is now. “Human cases of La Crosse encephalitis usually occur in areas with water-filled containers breeding mosquitoes. You can reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and neighborhood by emptying standing or stagnant water from old tires, pails, barrels, cans, bottles, wading pools, flower pots, and other containers,” said {Insert name and title of local health official}. “You can also clean out clogged gutters and drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers to eliminate mosquito breeding habitats. In addition, make sure that all windows have proper screens to help keep mosquitoes out of your home. Diseases like West Nile virus infection and La Crosse encephalitis can be prevented.”

West Nile virus and La Crosse virus may be spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. They cannot be spread from casual human to human contact. Symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, fatigue, confusion, weakness, nausea, vomiting and stiff neck. When outdoors during mosquito season, people can protect themselves by being properly clothed in long, loose and light colored clothing and by using mosquito repellents with DEET (at least 20%), picaridin, oil of eucalyptus, or IR3535. Mosquito repellents should always be used according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.

This year BPH will continue to monitor arboviral disease activity through mosquito surveillance in selected counties and through horse surveillance. Veterinarians should contact the West Virginia Department of Agriculture about suspected arboviral infections in horses. Testing of horses should be coordinated through the West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services at 1-304-558-3530 ext. 2602, or go to: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/ols/labs/Pages/microbiology.aspx>

For more information contact {Insert name of local health department} at {Insert phone number of local health department} or the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 1-304-558-5358 ext. 1, 1-800-432-1271, or go to:

<https://oeps.wv.gov/arboviral/pages/default.aspx>