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## NEWS RELEASE

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### First Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported in Kern for 2020

(Bakersfield, CA) – The Kern County Public Health Services Department has received confirmation of the first reported human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in Kern County this year. West Nile virus is a disease spread by mosquitoes that most often spreads to people during the summer and early fall when the mosquitoes that carry WNV are most active.

While many mosquito-borne illnesses such as WNV cause only mild symptoms in most people, the infection can cause severe illness and even death in rare cases. Up to 20% of people who become infected with WNV will have symptoms that may include fever, headache, body aches, joint pain, nausea, vomiting and sometimes a skin rash. Less than 1% will develop severe illness where the virus can affect the brain and/or nervous system. Symptoms of severe illness can include high fever, neck stiffness, and confusion. Residents who are experiencing symptoms or are concerned about WNV should contact their medical provider.

Residents are encouraged to reduce their risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

#### Reduce Mosquito Breeding Sites:

- **Remove** standing or stagnate water from containers such flowerpots, fountains, birdbaths, pet bowls, and wading pools. Items not traditionally viewed as containers, like gardening tools and toys, can also collect water.
- **Clean/scrub** containers that collect water weekly to remove any remaining eggs.
- **Maintain** swimming pools in working condition.
- **Stock** garden ponds with fish that eat mosquito larvae. Contact your local vector control district for free fish.
- **Report** areas of mosquito infestation to your local vector control district.

#### Decrease Your Risk of Mosquito-Transmitted Infections:

- **Avoid** mosquitoes and mosquito-infested areas at all times of the day.
- **Wear** long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- **Apply** mosquito repellent to exposed skin when outdoors.
- **Ensure** doors and windows have screens in good repair to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

Please visit our interactive WNV webpage at [www.kernpublichealth.com](http://www.kernpublichealth.com) that is updated regularly. Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live, work, or play.

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