



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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TO: School Superintendents, School Principals, and School Nurses

DATE: August 29, 2008

FROM: Jason Stull, VMD
State Public Health Veterinarian

SUBJECT: Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile virus (WNV)

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile virus (WNV) are rare but serious diseases that are caused by viruses transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitoes. The viruses can be transmitted to horses, other animals, and, in rare cases, people. WNV was first identified in NH in August of 2000. Since that time, three people in NH have become severely ill following WNV infection. In addition, EEE remains a concern in NH. Since 2005, 10 NH residents have been diagnosed with EEE; several of these individuals now have permanent disabilities and 2 died. Several of the individuals diagnosed with EEE have been school-age children.

Recently, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) observed the first mosquito-borne disease activity of the 2008 season. Mosquitoes collected in Kensington, NH tested positive for WNV. This means there is an increased risk to humans in NH. The risk of EEE and WNV will continue in NH until the end of the mosquito season (historically early October).

Personal protection through the use of protective clothing (e.g. long pants and long sleeved shirts) and effective mosquito repellants remain the best methods of reducing the risk to your students and staff. There are several types of repellants and active ingredients that are safe and effective at reducing mosquito bites. Personal protective measures as highlighted above and on the attached fact sheets and brochure should be employed when outdoors, especially between dusk and dawn. Although the risk is greatest in those regions with current or historic EEE or WNV activity, all areas should promote personal protection efforts.

Please consider distributing the attached fact sheets and brochure regarding EEE and WNV to parents and staff. Additional materials including posters and PowerPoint presentations for cable access are available at www.dhhs.state.nh.us. If you have additional questions or want up-to-date information for testing results in your community, you may visit our website at www.dhhs.state.nh.us or contact the NH DHHS EEE/WNV information line at 1-866-273-6453.