



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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For Immediate Release: September 30, 2004

04-73

WEST NILE VIRUS SAMPLE CONFIRMED NEGATIVE

Honolulu -- The Hawaii State Department of Health has received a negative confirmation from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on test results from a blood sample taken from a live sparrow collected at the Kahului Airport last week.

“We are very pleased that the test result is negative,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Paul Effler. “While these results are reassuring, we will remain vigilant in our coordinated efforts to minimize the chances of West Nile virus reaching Hawaii. West Nile virus is still a potential threat to Hawaii, as the disease continues to spread throughout the mainland and particularly on the West Coast.”

“We appreciate the public’s efforts to turn in dead birds to collection sites and report dead birds to 211. It is very important that we all continue to turn in dead birds for testing and reduce mosquito-breeding sites around our homes and work places,” said Dr. Effler.

Testing of dead birds is critical to identifying and controlling the spread of West Nile virus. Anyone finding a freshly dead bird should collect the bird in a plastic bag and deliver it to the nearest designated collection site. Birds collected are tested by the Department of Health’s State Laboratory. A complete list of collection sites is available at www.hawaii.gov/health or call 211 for further information.

(more)

Dr. Effler said last week's mosquito spraying and larvaciding at Kahului and Honolulu Airports enhanced the state's continuing preventative measures to eliminate mosquitoes at potential entry points for West Nile Virus. Residents, businesses, schools and landowners are also asked to eliminate standing water from their property and work sites to get rid of places mosquito can breed.

The Department of Health will continue to work with county, state, federal and private sector partners on bird and mosquito surveillance and mosquito control activities.

West Nile Virus is a disease that is usually passed between mosquitoes and birds, but it can also affect humans, horses, and other vertebrates. Most people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will show no symptoms. The majority of those that do display symptoms will have West Nile fever, a mild disease characterized by flu-like symptoms, which typically lasts a few days. Physicians and veterinarians statewide have been notified to be alert to symptoms and report any unusual activity.

For more information, visit the Department of Health web site at www.hawaii.gov/health or consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) site at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm

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