Macon County Health Department

1221 E. Condit Street, Decatur, IL 62521
Phone (217) 423-6988 Fax (217) 423-7436
MCHD@maconcountyhealth.org
www.maconcountyhealth.org

Public Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Confirmed Report of West Nile Virus in Mosquito Batches in Macon County

DECATUR, IL–The Macon County Health Department receives confirmed report of 5 mosquito batches in Macon County testing positive for West Nile Virus out of the 9 most recently tested batches. These numbers tend to show a correlation with increased risk for human cases. There are currently no human cases in Macon County and 4 human cases in other parts of Illinois.

Carol Carlton, Nursing Services Coordinator at the Macon County Health Department states that the Macon County Health Department began its seasonal campaign for West Nile Virus in May 2011. The campaign informs residents about prevention and encourages them to get rid of any standing water around their home and to use insect repellent when mosquitoes are out.

The Macon County Health Department also conducts surveillance of West Nile Virus in dead birds, which are fully intact without decomposition or bugs. If you find a dead bird please call the health department at 217-423-6988, ext 1134 to report it. Kathy Wade, Director or Environmental Health at the Macon County Health Department states, "Two dead birds from Macon County have been submitted to the state lab and both were found negative for the West Nile Virus."

Ms. Wade adds, "The surveillance of birds and mosquitoes provides an early warning. I urge residents to protect themselves and their family while outside when mosquitoes are biting. Most people who are bit by a mosquito carrying West Nile Virus may have very mild symptoms; however, in some people over the age of 50 and those with chronic health conditions, the illness can be more severe." She reminds the public that personal protection is the first line of defense against West Nile Virus or other mosquito illnesses. The following tips can help to reduce your risk of being bitten by a mosquito:

- **STAY** indoors at dawn, dusk and in the early evening when mosquitoes are most active. If you go outdoors, wear shoes, socks, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants. Loose-fitting, light colored clothing is best.
- **USE** insect repellent containing 25-35% DEET when outdoors, applied sparingly to exposed skin or clothing, as indicated on the repellent label. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that repellents used on children contain no more that 10% DEET, the active ingredient in mosquito repellents. Consult your physician before using repellents on young children or infants.
- **MAKE** sure window and door screens are "bug tight."

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FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
Carol Carlton, Nursing Services Coordinator
Macon County Health Department
(217) 423-6988
Robert Millington, Superintendent
Macon Mosquito Abatement District
(217) 875-2722