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Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

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PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MOSQUITOS THIS HOLIDAY WEEKEND
Nine West Nile Virus Positive Mosquito Pools in Westchester

While no human cases of West Nile Virus have been reported to date this summer in Westchester, West Nile Virus has been detected in nine mosquito pools primarily in southern Westchester. Higher than usual activity of West Nile Virus is also occurring in neighboring counties, with a total of 37 human cases of West Nile Virus reported for New York City and Long Island.

Due to Westchester's proximity to these areas and the upcoming rain expected, the Westchester County Department of Health is reminding all residents to protect themselves and their homes from mosquitoes this holiday weekend.

The Westchester County Department of Health prepared for the summer mosquito season by applying larvicide briquettes to numerous street catch basins throughout the County in an effort to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases such as the West Nile virus. Residents should continue to do their part by taking personal protection measures and removing standing water where mosquitoes can breed. Protective measures are especially important for individuals 50 years of age and over who are at increased risk of illness due to West Nile Virus.

To help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds where you live:

- Get rid of all water-holding containers, especially old tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles.
- Cover outdoor trash containers to keep rainwater from accumulating inside.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Clean roof gutters and remove standing water from flat roofs.
- Drain water in birdbaths, plant pots and drip trays twice a week.
- Sweep driveways after it rains so that they are free of puddles.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs. Keep them empty and covered if not in use; drain water that collects in pool covers.

To reduce your risk of mosquito bites:

- Avoid being outdoors in places and during times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Use insect repellents with no more than 30% DEET, but use them sparingly and with care.
- Select the lowest concentration effective for the amount of time spent outdoors.
- Products with concentrations around 10% are effective for periods of approximately two hours.
- A concentration of 24% has been shown to provide an average of five hours of protection. DEET should not be applied more than once a day.
- Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under 2 months of age. Carefully read and follow directions on the container and wash treated skin when mosquito exposure has ended.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks when outdoors in areas and at times where and when mosquitoes are active.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens.
- Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

For more information on the department's larviciding and West Nile virus prevention activities, call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 or visit www.westchestergov.com/health.

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