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COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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West Nile Virus Disease Reportable in Orange County

As the Health Officer of Orange County, California, under the authority provided in Health and Safety Code, Section 120175, I hereby make reportable, effective July 29, 2004:

West Nile Virus disease, defined as an illness

1) Clinically compatible with

- a) West Nile Fever (WNF) — fever, headaches, myalgias, lymphadenopathy, rash, fatigue and weakness lasting at least seven days OR
- b) West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease (WNND) — meningitis, encephalitis, acute flaccid paralysis

AND with

2) Supportive laboratory results

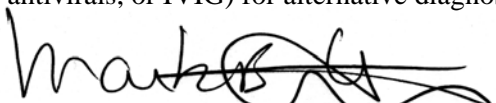
- a) serum or CSF enzyme immunoassay (EIA) for WNV-specific IgM, OR
- b) fourfold or greater change in WNV-specific IgG titer (or equivalent change using alternate IgG method) between acute and convalescent sera, OR
- c) isolation of WNV or demonstration of WNV antigens or genomic sequences in tissue, blood, cerebrospinal fluid, or other body fluid.

WNV disease is reportable within one working day of identification by telephone, fax or mail to:

Orange County Epidemiology
Telephone: (714) 834-8180, Fax: (714) 834-8196
Mail: P.O. Box 6128, Santa Ana, CA 92706-0128

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a serious public health concern. Since it was first documented in the United States in 1999 on the East Coast, it has spread southward and westward, causing 9,858 reported human infections and 262 deaths in 2003. In California, we have had one human infection in 2002, 3 in 2003, and 45 already in 2004, as of July 27th. Orange County recently reported its first human case of WNV, which was also unfortunately a fatality -- the first WNV death in California.

Aseptic meningitis and encephalitis are currently reportable diseases under State law (California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 2500). The California Department of Health Services and the California Conference of Local Health Officers support the implementation of WNV disease reporting to improve surveillance and raise awareness of the disease. Although there is no specific treatment for WNV infection, making this diagnosis may prevent use of unnecessary and potentially harmful therapies (e.g., antibiotics, antivirals, or IVIG) for alternative diagnoses.


Mark B. Horton, MD, MSPH
Health Officer

July 29, 2004
Date