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COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

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ORANGE COUNTY CONFIRMS FIRST HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE OF 2009

(Santa Ana) – A Fountain Valley woman in her forties has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, becoming Orange County’s first confirmed symptomatic human WNV case of 2009.

The woman was hospitalized in early July with symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, and is now recovering at home. The woman may have been exposed outside of Orange County. This is the second human case of West Nile Virus reported in California this year. Nationally there are 26 cases, and no WNV-related deaths have been reported. Last year, 8 asymptomatic blood donors, 71 confirmed symptomatic human cases of West Nile Virus infection and 3 WNV-related deaths were reported in Orange County.

“While we are not seeing the level of West Nile Virus activity that we experienced last year, it is important for the community to recognize that West Nile Virus is endemic in Orange County, recurring every year during the summer months and continuing into the fall,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Medical Director of Epidemiology. “The best way to avoid West Nile Virus infection is to take precautionary measures to avoid mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops the more serious symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District's website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

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