News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Monday, October 2, 2006

More Than 60 Wyoming West Nile Virus Cases Reported

CHEYENNE ó While the rate of new infections appears to be slowing, the number of laboratory-confirmed West Nile virus infections in Wyoming residents has gone up to 61 for this year, according to the Wyoming Department of Health.

Forty-four of the cases have been reported from Fremont County. There have been eight cases in Goshen County, two each in Big Horn, Washakie, Natrona and Platte counties, and one in Lincoln County. The deaths of one Fremont County man and one Goshen County man this year have been linked to West Nile virus.

õWhile we may be seeing fewer new cases being reported at this point, that does not mean that West Nile virus is gone,ö said Dr. Tracy Murphy, state epidemiologist with the Wyoming Department of Health. õWe know from past experience that people can still acquire West Nile virus in Wyoming this time of year, and residents should still take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.ö

At least 11 of this year cases have involved West Nile neuroinvasive disease (meningitis or encephalitis) with symptoms such as severe headache, fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions and paralysis. Most people who develop clinical illness as a result of the virus experience West Nile fever with symptoms including fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph nodes.

More information on West Nile virus, including prevention strategies, is available on the web at www.badskeeter.org or by calling the West Nile virus hotline at: 1-877-WYO-BITE.

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