

Item #13:

Village Trustee Underwood

- **Mosquito Abatement & West Nile Virus**

David Lothspeich

From: Clarke Customer Service [service@clarke.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2012 11:12 AM
To: David Lothspeich
Subject: Backpack Larviciding Service Completed



Property Name: VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE

This is a message from Clarke. This email is to notify you that your backpack larvicide application to mosquito breeding sites was performed on 08/13/2012.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact your control consultant:

George Balis (630) 671-3112 gbalis@clarke.com

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Article updated: 8/15/2012 6:51 PM

As risk grows regionally, Lake County reports first human West Nile case

By Russell Lissau

With health officials across the Chicago area warning of increased dangers of West Nile virus this summer, a Buffalo Grove man has been confirmed as Lake County's first human case of the year.

With cases in animals on a record pace this summer, it may not be the last.

"The risk of transmission is the highest it's been in years," health department spokeswoman Leslie Piotrowski said Wednesday.

Human cases also have been reported in Cook and DuPage counties, and cases in animals have been reported in all of the collar counties.

Although the risk of contracting West Nile may be greater due to the warm spring and unusually dry conditions this summer, officials say there's no reason to panic lock yourselves indoors.

You should still take in a neighborhood softball game or enjoy a family picnic. Just bring along some bug spray and wear the right clothes, experts say.

"We want people to be cautious but not to curtail what they've been doing," DuPage County Health Department spokesman David Hass said.

Not including the Lake County patient, 11 cases of West Nile virus have been reported statewide this year, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health's [website](#).

One of those cases has been in DuPage County. Additionally, Lombard Mayor Bill Mueller reportedly has the disease, but that has not been confirmed by state health officials.

All of the other cases have been in Cook County.

None of the patients have died.

In Lake County, the 68-year-old patient was admitted to a hospital Aug. 5 after developing symptoms of the mosquito-borne disease, including fever, vomiting and mental confusion, Piotrowski said.

The man was treated at an unspecified hospital for three days and then released, Piotrowski said. He was the first West Nile patient in Lake County since 2010.

West Nile virus first was identified in Illinois in 2001, and the first human deaths were reported the following year.

In the U.S., most people are infected between June and September, with infections typically peaking in mid-August.

Culex mosquitoes, which carry West Nile, thrive in dry conditions. And with a lack of rain, catch basins and other breeding areas are not being flushed.

Last year, 34 Illinois residents contracted West Nile and three died, state health officials said.

So far this year, 52 mosquito pools and three birds have tested positive for West Nile in Lake County. The ever-growing total is on pace to beat a record set in 2005, Piotrowski said.

That year, 11 people contracted the disease. One died.

Statewide this year, 37 of the state's counties have reported cases in humans, birds, mosquitoes or horses.

As of Wednesday, that includes:

• Eight birds and 1,620 mosquito batches in Cook County.

• Eleven birds and 327 mosquito batches in DuPage County.

• One bird and 59 mosquito batches in Kane County.

• Two birds and 19 mosquito batches in McHenry County.

Accurately predicting West Nile infections is difficult, Cook County Health Department spokeswoman Amy Poore said. But based on the data and the early human cases, her staff expects the diagnoses to increase through the summer.

"At times like these, it is important to remind the public that (the virus) is a serious though preventable disease," Poore said in an email. "The best way to prevent West Nile disease is to avoid mosquito bites."

People should use insect repellent, wear long sleeves at dawn and dusk, fix tears in screens and empty pools of standing water, officials said.

Additionally, keep roof gutters and downspouts clear of debris, cover trash containers, fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water and change the water in bird baths and plant urns at least once a week.

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Article posted: 8/22/2012 6:36 PM

CDC: West Nile outbreak one of largest in US

By

ATLANTA — The current West Nile outbreak is one of the largest in the U.S., with four times the usual number of cases for this time of year, federal health officials said Wednesday.

It's still too early to say how bad the year will end up because most infections are reported in August and September. But never before have so many illnesses been reported this early, said Dr. Lyle Petersen, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We're in the midst of one of the largest West Nile outbreaks ever seen in the United States," said Petersen, who oversees the CDC's mosquito-borne illness programs.

So far, 1,118 illnesses have been reported, about half of them in Texas. In an average year, fewer than 300 cases are reported by mid-August. There have also been 41 deaths this year, the CDC said.

And cases seem to be accelerating: about 400 of the cases were reported in just the last week.

Experts think the mild winter, early spring and very hot summer helped stimulate mosquito breeding and the spread of the virus. Mosquitoes pick up the virus from birds they bite and then pass it on to people.

CDC officials are also looking into the possibility that the virus mutated, but so far have no information showing that happened, Petersen said.

West Nile virus was first diagnosed in Uganda in 1937, but no cases were reported in the U.S. until 1999 in New York. The virus gradually spread across the country.

It peaked in 2002 and 2003, when severe illnesses reached nearly 3,000 and deaths surpassed 260. Last year was mild, with fewer than 700 cases.

Only about 1 in 5 infected people get sick. Early symptoms can include fever, headache and body aches. Some recover in a matter of days. But 1 in 150 infected people will develop severe symptoms including neck stiffness, disorientation, coma and paralysis.

Many illnesses probably go unreported, especially milder cases. In this year's case count, more than half are severe, CDC officials said.

In recent years, cases have been scattered across the country. Hot spots are usually in southeast Louisiana, central and southern California, and areas around Dallas, Houston, Chicago and Phoenix.

Those areas seem to have a combination of factors that include the right kinds of virus-carrying mosquitoes and birds, along with large numbers of people who can be infected, health officials say.

Illnesses this year have been reported in 38 states, but the bulk of them have been in Texas, with a concentration in the Dallas area.

It's not clear why Texas is seeing so many cases, but it's alarming. Twenty-one deaths have been reported in the state so far this year, which is more than all other years combined. Four of the Texas deaths were reported on Tuesday.

Officials last week started aerial spraying for mosquitoes in Dallas County. But it's too soon to measure the effect — it takes between three and 14 days for people to develop symptoms after being infected by a mosquito.

The best way to prevent West Nile disease is to avoid mosquito bites. Insect repellents, screens on doors and windows, and wearing long sleeves and pants are some of the recommended strategies. Also, empty standing water from buckets, kiddie pools and other places to discourage breeding.

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Article updated: 8/31/2012 8:55 AM

DuPage County now has 10 WNV human cases; residents urged to take proper precautions

By

DUPAGE COUNTY—The DuPage County Health Department announced on Friday that there are now 10 human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in DuPage County. Those affected by WNV are in their 20s-70s, and are located in Carol Stream, Downers Grove, Elmhurst, Lisle, Lombard, Naperville and Villa Park. One of those 10 cases resulted in a fatality related to WNV infection.

WNV is transmitted to people by infected mosquitoes, and can be prevented by:

- Using insect repellents when you go outdoors.
- Wearing long sleeves and pants from dusk to dawn.
- Installing or repairing screens on windows and doors. Using air conditioning, if you have it.
- Emptying standing water from items outside your home such as flowerpots, buckets and kiddie pools.

The Health Department reminds County residents that the presence of WNV is widespread in the DuPage County environment so the risk of WNV is elevated and may remain so until the arrival of cooler temperatures. Therefore, County residents should concentrate on personal protection and are urged to be cautious, but not curtail their outdoor activities.

The number of cases is expected to increase, since additional reports have been received and confirmation is anticipated in the coming days. Statewide, 2012 human case data, including cases by county, are provided on the Illinois Department of Public Health WNV website:
http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvsurveillance_humancases_12.htm.

Approximately one in five people who are infected with WNV will develop symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Less than 1 percent will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues).

People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and organ transplants, are at greater risk for serious illness.

There are no medications to treat, or vaccines to prevent, WNV infection. People with milder illnesses typically recover on their own, although symptoms may last for several weeks. In more severe cases, patients often need to be hospitalized to receive supportive treatment, such as intravenous fluids, pain medication, and nursing care. Anyone who has symptoms that cause concern should contact a health care provider.

For more information on the DuPage County Health Department, follow us on Twitter @DuPageHD or become a fan on Facebook.

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4 dead so far as West Nile disease becomes epidemic in Michigan

August 30, 2012 | Comments

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By Patricia Anstett
Detroit Free Press Medical Writer

West Nile disease -- a mosquito-borne illness -- has reached epidemic proportions in Michigan, particularly in older suburbs that ring metro Detroit and Grand Rapids, state health officials warned Wednesday.

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Michigan's 80 cases this summer, including four deaths, rank the state as the sixth highest in the nation with the problem, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Those at the greatest risk from West Nile are people older than 50, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems, such as kidney disease and cancer patients.

Michigan and the five other states -- Texas, South Dakota, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Louisiana -- account for 70% of the nation's West Nile cases, the CDC said Wednesday. Only Alaska and Hawaii have no reports of the disease so far.

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- CDC: Alarming increase seen in West Nile cases

Michigan's cases put it on track to match the state's worst West Nile outbreak in 2002, when 644 people contracted the disease and 51 died, said Dr. Dean Sienko, interim chief medical executive for the Michigan Department of Community Health, speaking Wednesday in a telephone briefing with the news media.

"This is something people need to pay attention to, particularly over the age of 50," who are most vulnerable to developing serious health problems from the disease, Sienko said.

Both he and CDC officials described the outbreak this year as an epidemic. They said cases, both in Michigan and nationwide, are likely to surpass the number reported in any year since 1999, when the disease was first



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WEST NILE VIRUS IN MICHIGAN

HOW IT SPREADS
West Nile virus is transferred most often from mosquitoes that were infected after feeding on infected birds. It has been found in blood donations because tests screen for it.

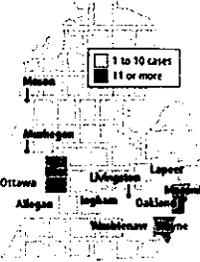


Culex pipiens is the species of mosquito that spreads the virus.

HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTIONS REPORTED IN MICHIGAN AS OF AUG. 29

COUNTY	Total cases	Deaths	Virus in donor's blood
Allegan	1	0	0
Ingham	4	0	1
Kent	20	0	10
Lapeer	1	0	0
Livingston	0	0	1
Macomb	11	0	2
Washtenaw	1	0	1
Wayne	31	3	8
City of Detroit*	12	1	1
TOTAL	80	4	27

SOURCES: Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



*NOTE: Detroit numbers are included in Wayne County totals.
PATRICIA ANSTETT, ROBIN ERB, DAVID PIERCE and MARTHA THIERRY/DETROIT FREE PRESS

MORE WEST NILE VIRUS INFORMATION

SEVERE SYMPTOMS
High fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, paralysis and coma.

OTHER SYMPTOMS
Body aches, nausea, vomiting and, sometimes, swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.

NO SYMPTOMS
Approximately 80% of people who are infected will not show any symptoms.

PRECAUTIONS
Use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants.
Fix screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

SOURCES: Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Empty standing water from flowerpots, buckets and barrels.
Change the water in pet dishes and water in birdbaths frequently.
Drill holes in tire swings to drain water.
Empty wading pools when they aren't being used.

RESOURCES
To learn more about West Nile virus, go to:
www.cdc.gov/westnile
www.michigan.gov/westnile
To report sick or dying wildlife, contact the Michigan Wildlife Disease Lab at 517-336-5030.
To report sick domestic animals, contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development at 517-373-1077.

PATRICIA ANSTETT, ROBIN ERB, DAVID PIERCE and MARTHA THIERRY/DETROIT FREE PRESS

reported in the U.S. near New York City's JFK International Airport.

Dry, warm weather appears to have contributed to the rising number of cases and will continue to pose problems as long as nighttime temperatures remain above 50 degrees — ideal mosquito-breeding weather, health and science officials say.

Michigan's 80 cases required hospitalization of 62 people, and four died, all in metro Detroit, Sienko said. He said he expects the number of cases to continue to climb for another month, because it typically takes up to two weeks for symptoms to occur after a person is bitten.

The latest death, reported this week, was an 86-year-old Wayne County woman. All four Michigan deaths have been among people older than 50.

Nationwide, 1,590 West Nile cases have been reported, including 66 deaths, according to the CDC. Texas, particularly the Dallas area, accounts for nearly half of the reports. There, officials are conducting pesticide spraying in communities that have asked to be included in prevention efforts.

Spraying is considered effective, but it is less common in many states, including Michigan, because many communities say they can't afford it.

One exception is Warren, where Mayor Jim Fouts ordered spraying of the city this summer.

Fouts also has increased monitoring of sources of standing water, such as swimming pools on foreclosed properties. Owners face fines of up to \$1,000 for letting stagnant water remain on their property.

Fouts said he ordered the spraying of Warren's 1,200 storm drains because he recalled several deaths and serious lingering health problems among Warren residents during the 2002 West Nile outbreak. Each spraying costs about \$20,000.

"It's better to be penny-wise than pound-foolish," he said.

As many as 80% of this year's West Nile cases in Michigan have been in the tri-county area, particularly suburbs built after World War II with more densely populated communities and storm drains and street catch basins where mosquitoes breed, said Ned Walker, a Michigan State University microbiologist and West Nile expert.



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Suburbs with higher numbers of West Nile cases this year include Allen Park, Berkley, Royal Oak, Westland, Redford Township and Dearborn Heights, he said.

Walker called storm drains "little mosquito factories" for the single species, *Culex pipiens*, also called a northern house mosquito, that "appears to be the sole carrier" of West Nile disease. He said the species likes small areas where water pools, such as tires and flowerpots, nooks of trees and gutters.

Dr. Steve Halstead, a veterinarian with the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, said that although horses and other animals can contract the virus, Michigan has only one case so far this year, in an unvaccinated horse in Montcalm County. There is a vaccine against the virus for horses, but not for humans.

Walker said the *Culex* mosquito travels about a mile from its breeding grounds. Females lay 150-200 eggs in their short 21- to 28-day life cycle. Some hibernate during the winter in basements, electrical transformers and other spots, he said.

"People need to be scared somewhat," he said. "The mosquito population with this infection is at its peak right now, this week. We'll see lots more human cases."

Contact Patricia Anstett: 313-222-5021 or panstett@freepress.com

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U.S. cases of West Nile virus set record, deaths rise: CDC

Wed, Aug 29 2012

By Sharon Begley

NEW YORK (Reuters) - A total of 1,590 cases of West Nile virus, including 66 deaths, were reported through late August this year in the United States, the highest human toll by that point in the calendar since the mosquito-borne disease was first detected in the country in 1999, health officials said on Wednesday.

The toll is increasing quickly. "We think the numbers will continue to rise," said Dr. Lyle Petersen, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Vector-Borne Infectious Diseases.

Through last week, 1,118 cases and 41 deaths had been reported. The updated figures represent a 40 percent increase in the number of cases and a 61 percent spike in the number of deaths, but are short of the all-time record for a full year: 9,862 cases and 264 deaths in 2003.

In hard-hit Texas, the number of confirmed cases soared to 894, with 34 people dead, this year as of Wednesday, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. Over half of the deaths occurred in the north of the state.

"It looks like it is going to be our worst year ever," said Dr. David Lakey, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services. "As I look at the data, I'm not convinced we have peaked."

All 48 contiguous states have reported cases of West Nile virus in birds, which act as hosts; in mosquitoes, which transmit it by biting birds and then mammals including humans, or in people. Only Alaska and Hawaii have been spared. And 43 states have at least one human case.

The Ohio Department of Health reported on Wednesday that a 76-year-old man had died from the virus, the state's first fatality this year.

"The virus is endemic at this point throughout the United States," with the possible exception of high-altitude regions such as the Rocky Mountains, said the CDC's Petersen. "There is a risk almost everywhere."

So far, however, more than 70 percent of the human cases have been reported in just six states: Texas, South Dakota, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Michigan.

Only 2 percent to 3 percent of cases of West Nile fever are reported to health officials, said Petersen, which suggests that the actual number of cases is 30 to 50 times higher than reported.

That is partly because an estimated 80 percent of infected people have no symptoms, said Dr. Robert Haley, of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, in an essay last week in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

About 20 percent of infections cause only mild symptoms, including aches and fever, explained Haley. One in 150 people infected with the virus develop neurological conditions such as meningitis, encephalitis and other illnesses that can cause disorientation, cognitive impairment, muscle weakness, and movement problems that resemble those of Parkinson's disease.

Of those who develop this "neuroinvasive" form of West Nile, an estimated 4 percent to 18 percent die, said Haley, mostly those who are older or suffering from other illnesses.

THE HOTTER THE WEATHER, THE FASTER THE VIRUS

There is no treatment for West Nile infection, and no vaccine. The disease is transmitted by *Culex pipiens* mosquitoes, also known as common house mosquitoes, and the only preventive measure is to avoid being bitten.

People can reduce their risk by eliminating the small pools of standing water - in bird baths, outdoor flower pots and the like - where *C. pipiens* breed.

Public health experts and entomologists are baffled about why 2012 is such a big year for West Nile. But Petersen said a U.S. heat wave has been an important contributing factor.

"Higher temperatures foster faster reproduction of both the mosquito and the virus," said Tony Goldberg, professor of epidemiology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, who has studied urban outbreaks of West Nile since shortly after the virus arrived in the Midwest.

"The hotter it is, the faster the virus can replicate," said entomologist Gabe Hamer of Texas A&M University.

As the virus reproduces more quickly inside its bird host -- it likes species from robins and blue jays to sparrows -- there is a greater chance that a mosquito biting the bird will pick up a large number of viruses and transmit them to its next victim.

Higher temperatures also increase mosquito activity, making them more likely to be flying around, especially at night, and looking for a meal.

Another factor contributing to this year's outbreak is the continuing cycle of droughts and downpours, a precipitation pattern



predicted by models of climate change.

Intense rain fills drainage ditches, storm sewers and culverts, and washes grass clippings, leaves and other organic matter into those pools of standing water, explained Wisconsin's Goldberg. Mosquitoes prefer to breed in water that has rotting organic matter.

With normal rainfall, those breeding pools are washed away in the next storm. But when heavy spring rains are followed by summer dry spells, as has been the case in much of the United States this year, the breeding pools remain for weeks or months, said Goldberg, and the mosquito population explodes.

"As we keep getting more climate extremes," he said, "there will be more years with many more cases of West Nile."

(Additional reporting by Marice Richter in Texas, editing by Michele Gershberg and Vicki Allen)

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U.S. cases of West Nile virus set record, deaths soar-CDC

12:47pm EDT

Aug 29 (Reuters) - A total of 1,590 U.S. cases of West Nile virus, including 66 deaths, have been reported through late August this year, the highest human toll reported since the mosquito-borne disease was first detected in the country in 1999, health officials said on Wednesday.

The toll is rising quickly and "we think the numbers will continue to rise," said Dr. Lyle Petersen, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Vector-Borne Infectious Diseases.

Through last week, 1,118 cases and 41 deaths had been reported, and the updated figures represent a 40 percent increase in the number of cases and a 61 percent spike in the number of deaths.

In hard-hit Texas, the number of confirmed cases soared to 733, up 197 from last week, said Dr. David Lakey, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services. Deaths reached 31, up 10 from last week.

"It looks like it is going to be our worst year ever," said Lakey. "As I look at the data, I'm not convinced we have peaked."

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West Nile Outbreak Reaches 1,100 Cases in US

 By Rachael Rettner, MyHealthNewsDaily Staff Writer | LiveScience.com – 3 hrs ago

The United States is experiencing one of the biggest outbreaks of West Nile virus in history, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As of Tuesday, 1,118 cases of the mosquito-borne disease had been reported. That's the highest number ever reported at this point in the year since the disease was first detected in the U.S. in 1999. If cases continue to grow at this pace, the West Nile outbreak could be the largest ever in the United States, said Dr. Lyle Petersen, director of the CDC's Division of Vector-Borne Infectious Diseases.

So far, 41 people have died from West Nile infections.

About 630 people have developed the rare neuroinvasive form of the disease, which affects the nervous system. The other cases involved what doctors call West Nile fever, a condition that can cause fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting.

Texas, the state hit hardest by the outbreak, has reported 537 cases of West Nile, close to 300 of which have been the neuroinvasive form. In some parts of the state, officials have begun aerial pesticide spraying to curb the spread of the disease.

Most people infected with the West Nile virus show no symptoms; from the number of neuroinvasive cases that have occurred, it can be estimated that more than 94,000 people in the United States have been infected with West Nile this year. It's likely that about 98 percent of cases of West Nile fever are not reported, the CDC says.

These unreported cases still take a toll on the nation's health and economy, as people who may not know that West Nile is the cause of their illness take time off from work or use health care resources, said William Schaffner, chairman of the department of preventive medicine at Vanderbilt University.

"The problem is even larger... than the already notably larger problem of neuroinvasive disease," Schaffner said. The impact of unreported cases is a factor in the decision to call the current West Nile outbreak an emergency, as Dallas did, Schaffner said.

The reason for the large outbreak this year is not clear, but it could be related to this season's especially hot summer. Hot weather seems to increase the virus' transmissibility, Petersen said.

Pass it on: More than 1,100 cases of West Nile virus have occurred in the United States this year so far.

Follow Rachael Rettner on Twitter @RachaelRettner, or MyHealthNewsDaily @MyHealth_MHND. We're also on Facebook & Google+.

- 5 Things You Need to Know About West Nile Virus
- 5 Most Likely Real-Life Contagions
- 8 Strange Signs You're Having an Allergic Reaction

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Central New York officials huddle today to tackle mosquito viruses

Published: Tuesday, August 21, 2012, 7:10 AM Updated: Tuesday, August 21, 2012, 7:30 AM



By **Mark Weiner, The Post-Standard**



Mosquitoes collected from Central New York swamps are examined under the microscope. Health officials look for mosquito species that bite birds and carry the Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus. When the virus is present in bird-biting mosquitoes, it's considered an early indication of a threat to humans. Ellen M. Blalock / The Post-Standard

Lysander, NY - Federal, state and local officials will gather today for a summit to coordinate their response to the rising number of mosquito-borne illnesses in Central New York.

The summit, organized by U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer's office, will explore ways to increase public awareness of the threat and the steps Central New Yorkers can take to protect themselves.

Summit participants also will try to develop a plan for Central New York towns and villages to improve their drainage practices and reduce mosquito breeding grounds, said Meredith Kelly, a spokeswoman for Schumer.

The summit, from 10 to 11 a.m. at Beaver Lake Nature Center in Lysander, had been planned before Monday's announcement of the **death of an Onondaga County resident** from West Nile virus. The meeting is open to the

public.

Onondaga County Health Commissioner Dr. Cynthia Morrow, state health officials and scientists from the state College of Environmental Science and Forestry are expected to lead the summit with town supervisors, parks commissioner and other municipal leaders.

Officials from the towns of Cicero, Fabius, Camillus, Lysander, DeWitt, Spafford, Van Buren and the village of Fayetteville in Onondaga County and the town of Hastings in Oswego County are among those who have agreed to take part, Kelly said.

Also at the meeting, Schumer's office plans to debut a new public service announcement about West Nile and Eastern equine encephalitis virus prevention. Students at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications volunteered to produce the video for free with Schumer's office.

The ads, which will air on Central New York television stations, include tips on how to avoid mosquito bites and how to stop mosquito breeding by removing standing water from your property.

In October, State Sen. Patty Ritchie, R-Oswegatchie, convened a separate summit of state and county health officials to discuss EEE after an Oswego County girl died from the mosquito-borne virus.

Since then, Ritchie helped secure \$150,000 from the state for EEE prevention and eradication programs in Central and Northern New York. Ritchie also recently hosted two EEE vaccine clinics in which more than 1,000 horses were vaccinated in Oswego and St. Lawrence counties, according to her office.

A state grant secured by Ritchie helped pay for the distribution of 2,736 packets of a locally-produced larvicide to kill young mosquitoes before they fly in Onondaga, Oswego, Madison, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.

Contact Post-Standard Washington Correspondent Mark Weiner at mweiner@syracuse.com or 571-970-3751.

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West Nile virus kills 17 in Texas, sickens hundreds



AFP – 28 mins ago

The US state of Texas is battling an outbreak of the West Nile virus, with 17 deaths being blamed on the mosquito-borne disease, authorities said Wednesday.

Throughout the state, 381 people have been sickened since the start of the year, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

"Texas is on track to have the most cases of West Nile illness since the disease first emerged in the state in 2002," it said in a statement.

The county incorporating Dallas, the ninth-largest city in the United States, has been the hardest hit, prompting the mayor to declare a local state of disaster.

"The City of Dallas is experiencing a widespread outbreak of mosquito-borne West Nile virus and has caused and appears likely to continue to cause widespread and severe illness and loss of life," Mayor Michael Rawlings said in the proclamation of emergency that takes effect Wednesday.

The virus has claimed ten lives in the county so far, local health authorities said. State officials put the toll at nine.

First discovered in Uganda in 1937, the virus is carried by birds and spread to humans by mosquitoes.

Severe symptoms can include high fever, vision loss and paralysis, while milder manifestations of the virus can range from headaches to skin rashes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of Tuesday 693 cases -- both confirmed and probable -- of the virus have been reported country-wide so far this year, including 26 deaths. Texas tops the list of both cases and fatalities.

In 2011, Texas saw a total of 27 cases and two deaths, the CDC said. Country-wide, 712 confirmed and probable cases and 43 fatalities were reported over that 12-month period.



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Christine Mann, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of State Health Services, told AFP that the outbreak could be linked to a mild winter and rainy spring in the state.

But "it's really not clear at this point," she said.

In an effort to stem the number of new infections, Texas authorities have urged residents to use insect repellent before heading outdoors, remain inside at dusk and at dawn, dress in protective clothing and drain standing water that could become a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Last month, officials in New York City said the West Nile virus had been detected on Staten Island, one of the city's five boroughs.