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## Second Detection of West Nile Virus in Kalamazoo County

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – Through its seasonal mosquito surveillance efforts, the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department’s Environmental Health Division reports the second positive detection of West Nile Virus in a Kalamazoo County mosquito pool or group of female mosquitoes of the same species. Of the more than 3,500 mosquito pools tested across Michigan this year, 43 have resulted in positive West Nile Virus detections.

“Defending against mosquito bites isn’t just about comfort—it’s about shielding yourself and your loved ones against the risk of mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus,” Environmental Health Manager Lucus Pols said. “Positive results from routine mosquito surveillance remind us that the threat for these diseases is very much real and that preventative measures should be taken seriously.”

Transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes, West Nile Virus is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While most infected with West Nile Virus may not show any symptoms, about one in five people develop mild flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, and fatigue. In rare cases, West Nile Virus can lead to severe neurological complications and death, especially among older adults and individuals with weakened immune systems.

Fortunately, there are steps people can take to prevent against mosquito-borne diseases, including:

- **Use Insect Repellents:** Apply Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, and 2-undecanone. Read labels before applying.
- **Wear Protective Clothing:** Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks treated with 0.5% permethrin to minimize skin exposure to mosquitoes.
- **Avoid Peak Mosquito Activity:** Mosquitoes are most active from around dusk to dawn, so try to limit outdoor activities during these times.
- **Eliminate Standing Water:** Drain and rid areas that hold water, such as plant pots, tires, clogged gutters, and bird baths. Standing water can serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- **Screen Windows and Doors:** Ensure windows and doors are equipped with screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering indoor spaces.

The Environmental Health Division will continue mosquito surveillance and testing throughout Kalamazoo County until the end of September, when mosquito populations tend to decline significantly. For more information about mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/outdoor/mosquito-borne/default.html>.

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