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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS REPORT FIRST HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS-RELATED DEATH IN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY FOR 2014 COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER URGES CONTINUED PRECAUTIONS

STOCKTON, CA (October 17, 2014) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services reports the county's first West Nile Virus (WNV) related death for 2014, is that of a woman in her sixties from the northern rural area of the county.

“This unfortunate death reminds us of the potential danger from mosquito bites and West Nile virus,” says Dr. Alvaro Garza, San Joaquin County Public Health Officer. As of October 17, 2014, there have been 8 human cases of WNV reported in San Joaquin County, so far this year. Last year, San Joaquin County reported 8 human cases with one (1) death.

WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. The San Joaquin County Mosquito and Vector Control District is still finding WNV activity in the mosquito population in the county.

The risk of serious illness to most people is low. However, some individuals – less than 1 percent of those infected – will develop serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis. Individuals 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms. Studies also show that people with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greater risk for serious illness.

Health officials recommend the most effective way for individuals to prevent exposure to mosquito bites and West Nile virus is to practice the following tips (remember, the “Four D’s”):

1. **DEET** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions to keep mosquitoes from biting you. Apply repellents only to exposed skin and/or clothing. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older (www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html).
2. **DAWN AND DUSK** – Mosquitoes that carry WNV tend to bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time. Make sure your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens

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with tears or holes.

3. **DRESS** – Wear clothing that reduces the risk of skin exposure to mosquito bites (i.e., long pants and long-sleeved shirts).
4. **DRAIN** – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including buckets, old car tires, and pet bowls. If you have a pond, use mosquito fish or commercially available products to eliminate mosquito larvae. Neglected swimming pools are also prime habitat for mosquito development. The San Joaquin County Mosquito and Vector Control District is available to help with neglected pools in the prevention of mosquito development. To request District service, call 209-982-4675, 1-800-300-4675 or visit the District website at www.sjmosquito.org

California's West Nile virus website at www.westnile.ca.gov/ includes the latest information on West Nile virus activity in the state. Residents are encouraged to report all dead birds and dead tree squirrels on the website or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

For additional information on West Nile Virus, visit the following websites:

- San Joaquin County Mosquito and Vector Control District www.sjmosquito.org
- San Joaquin County Public Health Services www.sjcphs.org/emprep/WestNileVirus.aspx
- California Department of Public Health www.westnile.ca.gov/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html

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Attachment: CDC West Nile Virus Fact Sheet