



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Public Health

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Dear Physician and Laboratory Director:

Effective immediately, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (LACDHS) is adding West Nile virus (WNV) infection to its list of reportable diseases by authority of the Health Officer under California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Sections 2503 and 2505. Physicians and laboratories are hereby ordered to report all laboratory findings of WNV to the Department of Health Services. Cases of persons with any positive WNV test must be reported within one (1) working day using a standard Confidential Morbidity Report; the CMR may be faxed to the DHS Morbidity Unit at 888-397-3778 or called in during normal business hours to 888-397-3993.

Enhanced WNV surveillance will allow for the timely ascertainment of disease transmission and prevention of subsequent cases through the provision of information to local mosquito abatement districts. This information will also assist us in providing targeted health education via the mass media and community organizations to communities at particularly high risk.

As you may know, at least 2 human cases have now been confirmed in LAC and more are expected as the summer and fall progress. About one in five persons infected with WNV will experience symptoms. Individuals should not have WNV screening tests performed unless they have the following signs or symptoms: WNV fever (i.e. headache, fever, muscle pain, and often rash, lasting more than 7 days), aseptic meningitis, encephalitis, or acute flaccid paralysis.

West Nile virus is a flavivirus that infects humans in almost all cases through the bite of infected mosquitoes. WNV transmission has also been documented through blood transfusions and organ transplantation, but screening programs in the US and Canada are now in place which have resulted in significant decrease in risk from these routes. For more information on WNV, please consult the LAC DHS web site at www.ladhs.org For other questions and medical consultation regarding WNV disease in humans, please contact the Acute Communicable Disease Control Program at 213-240-7941.

Sincerely,

Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

Laurene Mascola, MD, MPH, FAAP
Chief, Acute Communicable Disease Control Program