



TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and Other Healthcare Facilities

FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP, Commissioner and State Health Officer
WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health

DATE: May 8, 2017

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

Mosquito-borne diseases occur annually in West Virginia beginning in early spring and peaking in August and September, coinciding with mosquito activity. Arboviral infections, particularly La Crosse encephalitis (LAC) and West Nile virus (WNV), are endemic mosquito-borne diseases identified in West Virginia. In 2016, eight LAC cases and one WNV case were reported in West Virginia. Persons with severe arboviral infections will often have symptoms of encephalitis. Please be vigilant in identifying such cases, and ensure that all hospitalized patients with encephalitis undergo appropriate arboviral disease testing during mosquito season.

The Zika virus disease is reportable to the local health department (LHD) within 24 hours since it is an emerging disease of public health concern. To prevent local and sexual transmission and infections in pregnant women at-risk of having adverse birth outcomes, prompt public health action is needed. In 2016, 11 Zika virus cases were reported in West Virginia. Chikungunya and dengue fever, two other imported arboviral diseases, are sporadically reported in West Virginia and are reportable within one week and 24 hours, respectively.

When a mosquito-borne disease laboratory report is received, local public health staff will often conduct environmental assessments at the homes of patients to identify and remove mosquito breeding sites, and provide education on mosquito-borne disease prevention. Free diagnostic testing for arboviral diseases (WNV, LAC, chikungunya, dengue, and Zika) is available at the West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services (OLS). The preferred diagnostic testing for WNV and LAC is virus-specific IgM antibodies in cerebrospinal fluid and serum. For Zika testing, serum and urine specimens are needed to perform polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and MAC enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay tests. Chikungunya and dengue PCR tests require serum specimens. For more information on testing, visit the OLS website at <http://www.wvdhhr.org/labservices/labs/virology/arbovirus.cfm> or call (304) 558-3530.

For more information about mosquito-borne diseases in West Virginia, visit the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (DIDE) website at www.dide.wv.gov. You may also contact your LHD or call the DIDE at (304) 558-5358, extension 1 or the answering service at (304) 925-9946.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance. Warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.