



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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WEST NILE VIRUS PREVENTION GOES DOOR-TO-DOOR

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health today increased West Nile Virus (WNV) prevention efforts by going door-to-door in Kakaako, educating property owners about the disease and conducting mosquito suppression activities – larviciding. The WNV prevention effort covers a two-mile radius around Honolulu International Airport, Honolulu Harbor, and the Deep Draft Harbor. As part of the overall effort, the DOH Environmental Administration staff will be surveying this part of the Kakaako area.

While **there are currently no cases of WNV in Hawaii** eliminating mosquito-breeding areas will reduce the risk of the disease spreading should it reach Hawaii. There have been more than 1,300 cases of West Nile Virus reported across the mainland this year, including 35 deaths. Hawaii, Washington and Alaska are the only states that have not reported the disease.

West Nile Virus is a sometimes-fatal disease that is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. While it usually circulates between mosquitoes and birds, it can be transmitted to people by a bite from an infected mosquito. WNV is not transmitted from person to person or from birds to people.

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus will usually present either mild or no symptoms. On rare occasions, West Nile Virus can result in severe and sometimes fatal illnesses.

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Since infected mosquitoes transmit WNV, it is best to avoid mosquito bites. Individuals can protect themselves by wearing long pants and sleeves, using repellent that contains DEET, maintaining window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out and by eliminating standing water to reduce the number of mosquitoes as well as future generations.

Should a bird or mosquito test positive for West Nile Virus, the Hawaii State Department of Health along with county and federal partners will conduct immediate mosquito suppression activities such as the spraying of insecticide and the treatment of standing water for mosquito larvae. Residents will be given adequate notice prior to spraying activities.

For more information on West Nile Virus visit the DOH website at www.hawaii.gov/health.

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