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July 30, 2008

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
For Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **ACTIVITIES FOR THE 2008 WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV) SEASON**

On July 15, 2008, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Antonovich that directed the Directors of Public Health and Public Works to support local vector control organizations to investigate and clear open water ways that harbor mosquito breeding; and directed the Director of Public Health to fully implement the planned West Nile Virus awareness and surveillance program by working cooperatively with the Mosquito Vector Control Districts, the State and Centers for Disease Control; and to work with the local Vector Control Districts to add coverage in the unincorporated areas and report back to the Board in 30 days. This report is a response to that motion.

COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

DPH works cooperatively with the local Mosquito and Vector Control Districts (Districts), the Health Departments of Long Beach, Pasadena, Vernon and the Department of Public Works (DPW) in taking actions and preventive measures to control mosquitoes and potential breeding sites. The WNV Interagency Task Force of Los Angeles County, consisting of all the mosquito and vector control districts, health departments, the state and other local agencies, conducted its first meeting of the current mosquito season in late spring and continues to communicate on current control issues. Future meetings are scheduled to review present mosquito control methods and future issues expected for the current mosquito season.

INVESTIGATE AND CLEAR OPEN WATER WAYS

The Districts have primary responsibility for mosquito control in open water ways. During the past mosquito season, the districts worked closely with the DPW to identify potential and actual mosquito breeding sites that could be cleared and treated with appropriate environmentally friendly mosquito control measures. DPH will continue to work with the Districts and DPW on control measures in open water ways and is maintaining contact for operations during the current mosquito season.

THE WEST NILE VIRUS COOPERATIVE PLAN

The DPH WNV Plan, which outlines the responsibilities for various Public Health units, including Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC), the Public Health Laboratory, Veterinary Public Health, Environmental Health (EH), and DPW was successfully implemented during the 2007 mosquito season and has been implemented again this season. ACDC coordinates the surveillance for human cases, Veterinary Public Health conducts surveillance among birds, horses, and other animals, and EH works with the Districts to provide mosquito surveillance and control services on a countywide basis.

Securing mosquito control services in unincorporated areas continues to be a major component of the plan. A service agreement between DPH and the Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District, providing coverage for unincorporated areas of Agua Dulce and Acton, concluded on October 31, 2007. In March of 2008, DPH again successfully negotiated with the District for continued services for the upcoming season, with an extension of services through November 28, 2008 for the northern portions of Los Angeles County, including the areas of Acton, Agua Dolce, Lake Elizabeth, Lake Hughes, Leona Valley, Littlerock, Lake Los Angeles, and Pearblossom.

Negotiations for contracted services in several cities not currently annexed to Districts continue to be a challenge. In April of this year, DPH sent letters to the managers of Baldwin Park, South Pasadena, and La Cañada-Flintridge noting their previous commitments to providing the public health services and protection their citizens expect against mosquitoes and the diseases they carry. The letters urged them to take the steps necessary, such as annexing to appropriate Districts, to develop long-term programs for mosquito control.

DPH, DPW, the Districts, other local health departments, and various agencies continue to implement all components of the cooperative WNV plan. Surveillance reports will continue to be updated on the DPH website during the season for ready access by the public and other agencies.

DPH and the Districts, working as the WNV Interagency Task Force, utilize various media and provide outreach messages that enhance public awareness and education concerning WNV. Forums used by members of the Task Force include presentations to community groups, schools, and various city and county agencies, direct mailings, and cable spots. In an effort to provide a comprehensive approach and effectively address the multi-cultural diversity of our County, handouts available in ten different languages are regularly distributed at public outreach events. In addition, ACDC conducts outreach to senior centers annually and most of them order new materials each season. Organizations and individuals can visit the Acute Communicable Disease Control web site http://www.lapublichealth.org/acd/VectorWestNileEd.htm to view, download or order a variety of WNV educational materials at no charge.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:rw
PH:708:004

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director of Public Works
Mosquito and Vector Control Districts
Mayors, Cities of Long Beach, Pasadena, and Vernon