



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
300 N. San Antonio Road • Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-5102 • FAX (805) 681-5191
www.countyofsb.org

PRESS RELEASE

October 9, 2017

News Media Contact:

Charity Dean, MD
Health Officer
(805) 681-5152
charity.dean@sbcphd.org

WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTED IN SENTINEL CHICKENS NEAR SOLVANG

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – Four chickens have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) near the city of Solvang. These chickens are part of a “sentinel” chicken flock monitored by the Mosquito and Vector Management District (MVMD) and are located at the Wastewater Treatment Plant near Solvang. Detection in chickens means there is a risk of potential spread to humans via mosquitoes. This is the first detection in the county in 2017. No human cases have been reported to the Public Health Department this year.

Overall, activity levels of WNV are down from the same time in 2016. To date 211 human cases (8 fatal) have been confirmed in 18 California counties. The MVMD routinely tests birds, chickens, and mosquitoes to detect the presence of WNV. Testing throughout California has shown that WNV is present in the bird populations of 37 counties, mosquito pools from 26 counties, and chicken populations in 16 counties. West Nile virus is passed primarily between birds by mosquito vectors. Humans, horses, and other animals can become infected with WNV if bitten by an infected mosquito. Human-to-human transmission does not occur.

Most humans who become infected with WNV do not get sick. Some will have very mild symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches which subside after a few days to weeks. Those at risk for more serious illness include the elderly and people with suppressed immune systems.

The MVMD is taking additional steps for mosquito control in areas near Solvang. The public is advised to take the following precautions to reduce the risk mosquito-borne disease transmission: Avoid outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dusk and dawn. When outdoors, wear long pants and long sleeved shirts and use mosquito repellents. Ensure that door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair. Eliminate standing and stagnant water to prevent mosquito breeding. Vaccinations are available for horses from your veterinarian.

Statistics for California WNV activity can be found online at www.westnile.ca.gov.

Questions for the Mosquito and Vector Management District may be directed to David Chang, General Manager, at (805) 969-5050.

-30-