

Butte County Public Health Confirms Three More Human Cases of West Nile Virus

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Three new human cases of West Nile Virus have been reported within Butte County. One of the infected individuals was hospitalized with a serious brain infection. They are currently in recovery at a hospital within the county.

Public Health stated in its press release the new human cases of WNV are residents who live in Chico and the south county area. All three were 55 years and older. The recent cases now put the total number of human cases in Butte County to four for 2013. In late July, Public Health reported the first confirmed human case of WNV in an elementary aged child from north Chico who has since recovered.

The county has also reported 25 dead birds, 30 infected chickens, and 24 mosquito pools which tested positive for WNV, according to the state's website for WNV (westnile.ca.gov).

As of today, 37 human cases of WNV have been reported in 16 different counties throughout Calif. The state's site also suggests Butte County now has one of the highest levels of reported human cases in the state behind Los Angeles County (15). Shasta and Glenn Counties have both reported three human cases.

"Butte County has historically had some of the highest numbers of WNV cases per 100,000 capita in the state because of its environment and ecology," said Dr. Mark Lundberg, Butte County Public Health Officer.

Lundberg also stated the numbers show the risk remains high in Butte County and continues to increase.

"We know that WNV is circulating in our community and will continue to circulate for the next couple of months," said Lundberg. "It is very important that residents ramp up mosquito prevention efforts and avoid being bitten, as this is how the virus is spread to humans. With very little effort, WNV infection can be prevented by practicing the 3 D's: Using DEET, avoid being out during Dawn and Dusk, and Drain all unnecessary standing water."

Matt Ball, District Manager for the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District, stated Butte County is at an elevated risk for contracting WNV from mosquitoes because of the increasing mosquito populations. Ball said the increase is subsequently leading to widespread distribution of WNV.

“It’s imperative that residents assist with the prevention of mosquito breeding by inspecting and eliminating all standing water from their properties,” said Ball.

For more information, visit www.westnile.ca.gov or call 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) to report deceased birds or other animals. Residents can also track West Nile Virus activity in Butte County and neighboring counties on the state’s website.