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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Confirmed Human West Nile Case in Henry County**

**NAPOLEON, OH** — Henry County Health Department has reported its first human West Nile virus (WNV) case. This makes a total of five human cases that have been reported in Ohio and 659 in the United States during this mosquito season (June-December). This is the first case of human West Nile Virus in Henry County since 2002.

“Residents should be aware that West Nile virus (WNV) in mosquitoes is common in Henry County and Ohio. This year we’ve had five mosquito samples from different areas of the county that have tested positive for the virus,” stated Jon Lindsay, Director of Environmental Health. “This shows how important it is for the community to continue taking precautions against mosquito bites to reduce the risk of getting sick.”

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. It is not spread from one person to another. Most people infected with West Nile virus do not feel sick. About 1 in 5 people who are infected develop mild symptoms such as a fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. However, about 1 in 150 people infected develop more severe symptoms such as muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, high fever, and neck stiffness. Those who are over 60 or have certain medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, or high blood pressure are at a greater risk of severe illness.

“It’s important to remember that most people do not become sick with West Nile virus,” stated Allyson Smith, Director of Nursing. “However, if any resident or one of their family members develop more severe symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness, vision loss, numbness, disorientation or muscle weakness they should contact a health care provider immediately.”

The best way to prevent West Nile virus is protect yourself from mosquito bites. Residents should take the following steps to protect themselves and their family:

- **DEET:** Use insect repellents with DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus and IR3535.
- **Drain:** Empty standing water around your home, such as empty flowerpots, bird baths, and gutters.
- **Dawn and Dusk:** Avoid outdoor activities during peak mosquito hours.
- **Dress:** Wear lightweight, loose, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors if weather permits.
- **Door:** Keep door and window screens in good repair.

For more information regarding West Nile virus visit: [www.odh.ohio.gov/wnv](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/wnv) or [www.cdc.gov/west-nile-virus](http://www.cdc.gov/west-nile-virus)

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