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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Health Departments, Regional Offices of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Infection Control Professionals, Infectious Disease Physicians, Hospital Laboratories

FROM: Illinois Department of Public Health  
Communicable Disease Control Section

Illinois Department of Health  
Division of Environmental Health

Date: April 25, 2014

RE: Surveillance and Testing for West Nile Virus (WNV) and other  
Arboviral Infections, Summer 2014

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Human arbovirus cases are reportable to the Illinois Department of Public Health as soon as possible within seven days. All cases should be reported through the Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (I-NEDSS) or the local health department (LHD). Specimens that test positive for immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibody to West Nile virus (WNV), St. Louis Encephalitis virus (SLE), or other arboviruses are more likely to reflect an acute infection, if symptoms are clinically compatible with these arboviral infections. Cases of Dengue Fever in Illinois have all been in persons who have traveled overseas or to endemic areas. History, dates of travel and symptom onset date are important to actively monitor possible local dengue activities.

Healthcare providers shall send all human specimens (serum and cerebrospinal fluid) to private/reference laboratories for initial diagnostic testing. IDPH's Division of Laboratories will provide confirmatory testing for the first few IgM positive cases of WNV, and other Arboviral Infections (Dengue Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), California Encephalitis (CE), and Western Equine Encephalitis (WEE). IDPH's Division of Laboratories will also notify private/reference laboratories when they no longer need to forward specimens for confirmatory testing. However, if providers and private laboratories desire additional testing for specimens, they should coordinate with their local health department to ensure specimen(s) are submitted to the IDPH laboratory. The LHDs will consult with IDPH's Communicable Disease Control Section (CDCS) for testing approval. Unless a specific request is

made, blood banks should not send specimens to the IDPH laboratory for testing. The decision to test for CE and EEE will be based on clinical symptoms, exposure history, and findings of environmental surveillance.

Testing for CE will be done if the following criteria are met:

1. Specimens must be from individuals less than 18 years old who test negative for WNV.

Testing for EEE will be done if the following criteria are met:

1. The case has symptoms of encephalitis.
2. The specimen tested negative for other arboviruses, and
3. There is plausible exposure to areas where EEE virus has been detected in the environment.

The 2014 environmental arboviral surveillance will include testing of dead birds (*Passeriformes*- perching birds, crows, blue jays and robins) and *Culex* mosquito samples for WNV. Some *Culex* mosquito samples will also be tested for SLE. Local health departments can submit dead birds for WNV testing from May 1 through October 15, 2014. Guidelines for submission of dead birds for WNV testing will be sent to local health departments in April. Mosquito pools will also be tested for WNV by IDPH and about 50 local agencies between May 15 and October 1. Local agencies will receive periodic summaries of environmental data.

The earliest WNV human case in Illinois has occurred as early as May (2006), but has occurred as late as August (2009, 2010). The IDPH WNV website will be updated weekly from May 15 to the end of the 2014 arboviral season, or as needed depending on the caseload for the period. For human WNV cases only state data will be provided in the weekly update, and only regional data will be reported for WNV-associated human deaths. The LHDs are encouraged to compose and release public service announcements regarding prevention measures for their jurisdiction, because their residents may better heed information specific to their residential area.

The 2013 West Nile Virus surveillance report is available at the following link: <http://idph.adobeconnect.com/wnv-surveillance-report-2013/>. Local health departments can review case definitions and other WNV and arboviral related information on the IDPH web portal. More Illinois WNV information is also available on the IDPH Environmental Health WNV Web site: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm>.

For additional questions regarding WNV and arboviral reporting and laboratory testing please call IDPH's Communicable Disease Control Section at 217-782-2016. For additional questions regarding environmental testing and surveillance please call IDPH's Division of Environmental Health at 217-782-5830.