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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

St. Clair County Health Department

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TO: St. Clair County Providers,
Hospital ICPs, Emergency
Departments, ED Physicians, Walk-in
Clinics, Veterinarians, SCC Township
Offices

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EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS RISK

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) are alerting healthcare providers to increasing Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) activity in the state. Seven cases of EEE have occurred in residents from Barry, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties. Three cases were fatal. As of September 16, MDHHS has been notified of equine and white-tailed deer deaths attributable to EEE in Barry, Cass, Genesee, Kalamazoo, Lapeer, St. Joseph and Van Buren counties. Collectively, this activity indicates high risk from EEE in these counties. This mosquito-transmitted disease is a rare cause of encephalitis, however approximately a third of those who develop illness die and many survivors will have mild to severe permanent brain damage.

Health care provider recommendations:

- Test any human cases of unexplained meningitis or encephalitis occurring now until there is a hard frost, for exposure to arboviruses.
- The MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories offers a specialized panel for arboviruses endemic in Michigan, including West Nile Virus (WNV), EEE, St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLE) and California Group viruses. In some instances, MDHHS testing has been more sensitive at detecting arbovirus-associated illnesses than those methods currently available through commercial laboratories.
- For additional information on arbovirus testing through MDHHS, contact the Bureau of Laboratories at 517-335-8063, or the Communicable Disease Division at 517-335-8165.

Citizens recommendations:

- Take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites.
- Anyone living in an area where EEE is circulating can get infected. The risk is highest for children, people who live in or visit woodland habitats, and people who work outside or participate in outdoor recreational activities, because of greater exposure to potentially infected mosquitoes.
- Strong consideration for postponing, rescheduling or cancelling evening outdoor activities is advised.

For additional information about arboviruses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's EEE website at <http://www.cdc.gov/EasternEquineEncephalitis/>, WNV website at <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile> or the Michigan Emerging Diseases website at www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases.

Call SCCHD with questions or to report suspect or confirmed cases of EEE (810) 987-5300 during regular business hours. Refer to the "After Hours Emergency Contact List" or www.scchealth.co for after-hours contact.