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For Immediate Release  
Aug. 18, 2006

## **ODH REPORTS FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN 2006**

*Ohioans urged to take simple steps to protect themselves and their loved ones*

COLUMBUS – Ohio has recorded its first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in 2006, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) said today.

The patient is a 2-year-old female from Fulton County; she is recovering.

“This news reminds us once again the importance of Ohioans taking steps to protect themselves and their loved ones from potential illness by avoiding mosquito bites,” said ODH Director J. Nick Baird, M.D. “This little girl and her loved ones are in our thoughts.”

To avoid possible infection from mosquito bites: avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active; if you must be outdoors, be sure to wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, shoes and socks - light colors are least attractive to mosquitoes; use insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or lemon eucalyptus oil and follow the label directions.

To eliminate mosquito breeding sites near your home: remove all discarded tires and other water-holding containers such as tin cans and unused flower pots, from your property to eliminate standing water; make sure all roof gutters are clean and drain properly; clean and chlorinate pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs; change water in bird baths weekly.

Although cases of WNV have decreased considerably since 2002 when ODH reported 441 human cases, this unpredictable virus could return at higher levels in 2006. After reporting 12 cases in 2004, ODH reported 61 cases in 2005. WNV tends to circulate most widely during drought-like conditions, which have not been seen in Ohio this year, said Rich Gary, chief of ODH’s Vector-borne Disease Program.

So far in 2006, ODH has identified 12 WNV-positive birds, 91 WNV-positive mosquito pools and no WNV-positive horses.