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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

## Health Department Confirms Two Human West Nile Virus Deaths in DuPage County for 2023

**DuPage County** - The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) has confirmed the first two human deaths due to West Nile virus (WNV) in 2023. An Addison resident in their 70s and a West Chicago resident in their 60s who both became ill in late August have died.

There have been 6 human cases reported in DuPage County in 2023.

WNV is transmitted to people by infected mosquitos. Approximately one in five people who are infected with WNV will develop symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Less than one percent will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues).

People over the age of 60, and those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and organ transplants are at greater risk for serious illness, and rarely may progress to coma and death. Anyone who experiences symptoms that cause concern should contact their healthcare provider.

“We are saddened to report the first two deaths from West Nile virus in DuPage County for 2023,” said Adam Forker, Executive Director, DuPage County Health Department. “Please make sure to protect yourself and loved ones from mosquito bites and reduce your exposure.”

The best way to prevent WNV is to avoid mosquito bites and follow the four Ds of defense.

- **Drain:** Drain those items that collect standing water around your home, yard, or business. Scrub and refill pet water dishes and bird baths regularly.
- **Defend:** Use an insect repellant containing DEET when outdoors and reapply according to directions.
- **Dress:** Wear long pants, long sleeves, and closed-toe shoes when outside to cover the skin.
- **Dusk to dawn:** Wear repellant outdoors during these prime times for mosquito activity.

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Residents are encouraged to check the Personal Protection Index (PPI) on the Health Department's [website](#) for the most up-to-date information on WNV activity.

The current PPI level is at 3 (high), which indicates multiple confirmed human cases in DuPage County. The recommended actions are Drain, Defend, Dress, and Dusk to Dawn.

The PPI widget is updated by 3:00 p.m. every Wednesday throughout the WNV season. These weekly updates are determined by the Health Department's vector-borne disease surveillance experts.

WNV activity generally decreases in the fall when cooler temperatures arrive and especially after the first frost of the season. Additional information and resources on WNV prevention are available at [www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html) and <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus.html>.

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