FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fight the Bite:
Mosquito season arrives in North Idaho

HAYDEN, ID – Panhandle Health District (PHD) is urging residents to be aware of mosquito-borne illnesses. Historically, a wet and snowy winter season leads to additional snowmelt and new sources of standing water during the spring and summer months. These conditions are ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

“Mosquito season has arrived in the Inland Northwest,” Dave Hyoisky, PHD Epidemiologist declared. “Mosquitoes native to this region can carry and spread a variety of viruses. We are particularly concerned about a possible increase in locally-transmitted West Nile Virus cases.”

In 2016, several cases of West Nile Virus were reported in local horses and the virus contributed to four horse deaths within Panhandle Health District. None of these horses reported recent travel outside the Inland Northwest.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is transmitted to people, birds and other animals by the bite of an infected mosquito. WNV can cause serious illness in people of any age, but especially in people over the age of 50 or those with other underlying medical conditions.

You can “Fight the Bite” to prevent WNV and other mosquito-borne illnesses by taking the following steps:

1. Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by removing standing water around your home and property, including garbage cans, bird baths, tires, wheel barrows, etc.
2. Inspect window and door screens to ensure they are fitted and repaired; keeping mosquitoes outdoors.
3. Wear repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus according to the label. Consult with your physician before applying repellent on an infant.
4. Limit activity and wear long-sleeves and pants between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.

There is no WNV vaccine available for people. Horse owners can take precautions and protect their animals by talking with their veterinarian about West Nile Virus vaccines.

Other viruses, such as Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya are primarily a concern for people who may by traveling to areas where the viruses are active. If residents plan to travel outside Idaho to more tropical locations, they are advised to review the CDC’s travel notices and warnings in advance.

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