![Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department logo]

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
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West Nile Virus Positive Human Cases in Southwest Nebraska

Five human cases of West Nile Virus have been reported in the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) nine-county health district. Three are positive clinical cases of West Nile Virus currently receiving medical care and two are blood donors who also tested positive but were not symptomatic.

"This is a good reminder for everyone to continue taking preventive measures against mosquito bites," states Melissa Propp, RN, Public Health Nurse at SWNPHD. "We have not detected any West Nile positive mosquito pools in the health district in the 2021 season; however, until there is a hard freeze, mosquitoes are still present in southwest Nebraska and may potentially be carrying West Nile Virus."

The incubation time for the development of symptoms of West Nile Virus takes about 3-14 days. Approximately 80% of all people who become infected with West Nile Virus will not experience any symptoms. The symptoms people may experience are fever, headache, body aches, joint pain, rash, vomiting, and diarrhea. In severe cases, West Nile Virus can invade the brain and spinal cord leading to stiff neck, confusion, paralysis, coma, or death.

Three deaths caused by West Nile Virus were reported in the state of Nebraska so far in 2021. There is no treatment for West Nile Virus. The best way to avoid becoming sick is to take actions to prevent mosquito bites. This includes wearing insect repellent and long shirts and pants, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at www.swhealth.ne.gov or by calling the McCook office at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th in McCook. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Information can also be found on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

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