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**For Immediate Release**

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## **BUTTE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH CONFIRMS FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN 2012**

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. — A Chico woman has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) according to Dr. Mark Lundberg, Butte County Health Officer. This is the first confirmed human case in Butte County for 2012. The older woman developed neuroinvasive disease, the most severe form of WNV.

“We are seeing higher numbers of West Nile activity throughout the state,” said Lundberg. “The numbers are up for human cases, dead birds, mosquito samples, horses, and sentinel chickens, as compared to this time last year. The public should take extra care to avoid mosquito bites. Prevention is the key to stopping the spread of the virus.”

As of August 10, 2012, WNV activity has been detected in 32 of California’s 58 counties, with 8 of those counties reporting human cases of WNV infection. In Butte County, two dead birds have tested positive for the virus, as well as six mosquito pools and one sentinel chicken.

All ages are vulnerable to infection and should be educated about WNV prevention. However, most individuals who become infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Individuals 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms if infected. Recent data also indicates that those with diabetes or hypertension may be at greatest risk for developing serious symptoms.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Residents can reduce the risk of infection by taking precautions to prevent mosquito bites and to protect their health:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- While outdoors, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when it’s possible.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, Picaridin or IR3535 according to instructions.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.