



County of San Diego

# PHYSICIANS' BULLETIN

Health and Human Services Agency ♦ P.O. Box 85222, San Diego, CA ♦ 92186-5222 ♦ [www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cnty/cntydepts/health](http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cnty/cntydepts/health)

August 2004

*"Focusing on Families as our Customers"*

No. 450

## WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTION IS REPORTABLE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Since it was first detected in New York City in 1999, West Nile Virus (WNV) has proven its capacity to spread rapidly, to infect large number of people, and to cause severe neuroinvasive disease. Over the past five years WNV has been documented in every one of the contiguous United States, Canada and Mexico. About 20% of those who become infected develop West Nile Fever, which includes fever, headache, body aches, occasionally a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. One in 150 persons infected with the WNV develop a more severe form of disease, West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease (WNND):

encephalitis, meningitis, acute flaccid paralysis or atypical Guillain-Barré Syndrome). Patients with WNND may present with headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. Persons at risk include residents and visitors of areas in which WNV activity has been identified; those older than 50 years are at greater risk of severe disease.

Viral meningitis and encephalitis, as well as West Nile Fever, West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, in addition to any positive laboratory finding of West Nile Virus are reportable within one (1) working day to the County Public Health Services by telephone, fax or mail to:

San Diego County Community Epidemiology  
Telephone: (619) 515-6620  
FAX: (619) 515-6644  
1700 Pacific Highway, Room 107  
San Diego, California 92101

West Nile virus is a public health concern. It has been documented in birds and horses in San Diego County in 2003 and 2004. County Public Health Services relies heavily on information reported by health care providers and laboratories in determining the extent of health problems and in planning and implementing actions and programs. Rapid recognition of human West

Nile infection in San Diego County will help in expediting appropriate response measures. Therefore, under authority of the California Health and Safety Code, and the California Code of Regulations, the County Public Health Officer has made West Nile virus infections reportable in San Diego County, effective August 19, 2004.

**West Nile virus infection**, as follows:

**1. Any positive laboratory finding of West Nile virus,**

**OR**

**2. A. Clinically compatible case of:**

- 1) West Nile Fever (WNF) – fever, headache, myalgia, lymphadenopathy, rash, fatigue and weakness lasting at least 7 days, OR
- 2) West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease (WNND) – meningitis, encephalitis, acute flaccid paralysis or atypical Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)

**Which is supported by:**

**B. Any of the following laboratory results:**

- 1) serum or CSF enzyme immunoassay (EIA) for WNV-specific IgM, OR
- 2) fourfold or greater change in WNV-specific IgG titer between acute and convalescent sera, OR
- 3) isolation of WNV or demonstration of WNV antigens or genomic sequences in tissue, blood, CSF, or other body fluid.

**For additional information on WNV and specific instructions on collection and submission of specimens please visit the San Diego County EMAN website at:**

**<http://www.emansandiego.com>**

**- LABORATORY -**

**The San Diego County Public Health Laboratory offers testing for selected vector-borne diseases. For information and specific instructions on collection and submission of appropriate specimens, call the Public Health Laboratory at (619) 692-8500.**

*The Physicians' Bulletin is published on an as needed basis by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency to provide updated information on health issues of concern to San Diego County's medical community.*

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