



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Urges Community Vigilance
Following Recent detection of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)
in Van Buren County**

Lawrence, MI – August 13, 2024 – The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department (VBCDHD) is calling on residents to take precautionary measures after the recent identification of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in the area. EEE is a rare but severe mosquito-borne illness that can impact both humans and animals, leading to serious neurological symptoms and, in some cases, death.

In response to recent surveillance activities, VBCDHD is enhancing public health communications and education to prevent further spread of EEE. Eastern Equine Encephalitis is only spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE is not spread person-to-person, people to animals, or animals to people. Here's how the public can protect themselves:

1. Protect Against Mosquito Bites:

- Use EPA-approved insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Wear long sleeves and pants, especially during dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Ensure windows and doors are fitted with proper screens to keep mosquitoes out.

2. Remove Standing Water:

- Regularly empty containers that collect water, such as flowerpots, birdbaths, and children's pools.
- Clean out gutters to prevent water accumulation.
- Frequently change water in pet dishes.

3. Stay Updated:

- Monitor local health advisories about mosquito disease activity.
- Report dead birds to local authorities, as they may indicate the presence of EEE in the area.



4. Safeguard Livestock and Pets:

- Vaccinate horses against EEE and use protective measures like insect repellent. Consider stabling animals during peak mosquito activity.
- Limit pets' outdoor activities during dawn and dusk.

Dr. Larry Wile, Medical Director of VBCDHD, stressed the importance of these precautions: "While EEE poses a significant health risk, there are effective steps we can all take to reduce the chances of infection. By remaining vigilant and following these guidelines, our community can protect itself from this serious virus."

For more detailed information on EEE, including additional prevention tips and current updates, please visit the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' EEE resource page at www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases/home/eastern-equine-encephalitis.

The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department is actively monitoring the situation and will provide further updates as necessary. For local health information and resources, please visit our website at www.vbcassdhd.org or follow us on social media.

About the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department:

The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department is dedicated to promoting and protecting the health of all residents in Van Buren and Cass counties. Through education, prevention, and community partnerships, we work to create a healthier and safer environment for everyone.

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