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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOSQUITOES POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTED IN SHELBY COUNTY

SHELBY COUNTY, TN – The Shelby County Health Department’s Mosquito Control Program has received laboratory confirmation that mosquitoes collected in zip codes 38115 and 38118 are positive for the West Nile Virus. These are the first positive mosquito pools found within Shelby County in 2019. Mosquitoes carrying the virus are expected to become widespread throughout the county before the end of summer.

The Health Department’s Mosquito Control Program has stepped up efforts to control mosquito breeding in the affected zip codes by treating mosquito-breeding sites with insecticides approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Treating mosquito breeding areas has been confirmed as the most effective way of controlling mosquito populations. The Mosquito Control program is also using gravid traps, a kind of mosquito trap, to capture and kill adult mosquitoes in the affected zip codes.

Shelby County residents are valuable partners with public health in the fight against mosquitoes. Eliminating mosquito-breeding sites around homes and businesses is crucial to controlling our mosquito problem. Any object that collects rainwater is a potential breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The Health Department encourages all residents to take the following measures to control mosquito populations around their homes and businesses:

- Clean rain gutters and downspouts
- Discard old tires or store inside where rain water cannot collect inside of tires
- Discard tin cans, buckets – any container that might collect water
- Empty and refill pets’ water bowls at least every few days
- Empty, clean and refill birdbaths, “drip plates” underneath flower pots and small wading pools weekly.

No human cases of West Nile Virus have been reported to the Health Department in 2019. In 2018, there were four human cases of West Nile Virus reported in Shelby County, and three fatalities. Individuals over the age of 50 and those with compromised immune systems are more likely to develop severe illness when infected with West Nile Virus.

Protect yourself against mosquitos that may carry the West Nile Virus by taking these precautions:

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- Wear long pants and long-sleeve shirts when working or playing outside, especially in the evening and at night
- Wear DEET-containing mosquito repellants. Follow label directions
- Install or repair windows and door screens.

For more information about the Shelby County Health Department's Mosquito Control Program, visit our website: <http://www.shelbytnhealth.com/>.

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