
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Found in Kent County

As a result of a massive mosquito surveillance project conducted by the environmental health division at the Kent County Health Department (KCHD), this season's first positive specimen of West Nile Virus (WNV) has been discovered. THIS IS NOT A HUMAN CASE.

The positive sample was found in a pool of tested mosquitoes from the ZIP code 49507 in the city of Grand Rapids. The sample that yielded the positive result was collected between Tuesday August 8 and Thursday August 10, 2017.

The Kent County Health Department has been capturing and testing mosquitoes in 11 traps strategically placed throughout the county since early June. The traps, known as a Gravid trap, were placed in the 49503, 49504, 49507 and 49519 zip codes. There are also 4 traps set in the county that are designed to attract *Aedes Egypti* and *Aedes Albopictus* mosquitos, two species known to carry the Zika virus. So far, KCHD has not found a specimen of either species. The project will continue until Labor Day.

"The fact that we have found West Nile in only one area does not mean that it is confined to that ZIP code," says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer with KCHD. "We expect West Nile to be present to some degree until the first frost. We want people to be aware that they can greatly reduce their own risks by taking some simple precautions. This finding is significant because this is our first alert to the presence of West Nile as it begins to surface at this time of the year."

Prevention is critical in the fight against WNV an illness that can be deadly in some people, especially those with weakened immune systems and the elderly. The Kent County Health Department recommends wearing a mosquito repellent that contains 10 – 35% DEET, wearing light colored clothing and staying indoors during dusk. You can help stop mosquitoes from breeding by removing any standing water in your yard and keeping your lawn and shrubs cut.

West Nile Virus was first detected in the United States in 1999. Since the first case was diagnosed in Michigan in 2001 more than 1100 people have been diagnosed with the disease. 92 people have died. In 2001 and again in 2012, Kent County had the second highest number of West Nile cases in the state. More about West Nile Virus can be found [here](#).

MEDIA NOTE: HD Broadcast Quality video of KCHD's mosquito surveillance project can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL5tiEzwXqo>

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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