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July 23, 2021

Dear Physician and Laboratory Director:

West Nile Virus (WNV) continues to be a threat in Los Angeles County (LAC) and is predicted to escalate during the next month. Last year, there were 93 cases, including 71 with neuro-invasive disease and 7 deaths. Public Health reminds clinicians the importance of recognizing and reporting cases and promoting mosquito-borne disease prevention with their patients.

The LAC Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends that medical providers:

- ✓ Educate patients, especially those over 50 years of age and those with chronic medical conditions, about how to reduce their risk of WNV.
- ✓ Order WNV testing for all patients with aseptic meningitis, encephalitis, acute flaccid paralysis, or nonspecific illness consistent with WNV fever, from now through December in California.
- ✓ Consider Saint Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLEV) infection if WNV testing is negative and there is no other likely etiology.

Laboratory diagnosis is usually done by testing serum or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) for WNV-specific IgM antibodies or viral detection using polymerase chain reaction (PCR). These tests are available at many commercial laboratories and are free of charge at Public Health Laboratory (PHL).

The LAC DPH PHL provides WNV-IgM serum antibody testing for suspect cases as well as for confirmation of ambiguous serum test results. WNV-IgM and PCR testing on CSF is available through the

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and can be arranged through PHL. PHL and CDPH do not charge the submitter for these services. Testing at PHL from December to April requires consultation with the Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) Program (213) 240-7941.

Human WNV and SLEV infections are reportable conditions in California and health care providers are mandated to report cases to the local health department within one working day. Reporting of WNV and SLEV cases guides LAC DPH and the LAC mosquito abatement districts to target mosquito abatement services, surveillance activities and health education. We remind clinicians that all cases of acute encephalitis and meningitis (including those pending definitive diagnosis or suspected to be of viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic etiologies) also are reportable within one working day.

Cases may be reported to Los Angeles County Department of Public Health by:
Health care providers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Phone - call the Communicable Disease Reporting System at (888) 397-3993 or▪ Mail or fax - complete a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) form and follow fax and mail instructions. (http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/reports/cmr-h-794.pdf)
Laboratories:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) for connected laboratories▪ Web-based vCMR Community Reporting Module system▪ Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR), attach a copy of your lab report and fax to (888) 397-3778

LAC DPH provides updated surveillance reports to the medical community throughout the summer and fall. To receive weekly WNV and arboviral surveillance reports send an email to ACDC2@ph.lacounty.gov. For additional information, consult the LAC DPH website: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/VectorWestNile.htm>.

Medical consultation regarding WNV and arboviral infection in humans, prevention, surveillance activities, and test interpretation is available by contacting ACDC program at (213) 240-7941. DPH looks forward to working with clinicians and laboratories in our WNV and arboviral surveillance efforts.

Sincerely,



Sharon Balter, M.D.

Director, Acute Communicable Disease Control Program

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c: Umme-Aiman Halai, M.D.