



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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North Texas Region Unites to Fight West Nile Virus

Four North Texas county health departments are melding their planning, research and information, and efforts to make a collective impact on this year's West Nile virus season.

Similarities are reflected in Dallas and Tarrant counties plans to trap and test mosquitoes earlier than they did in 2012, to add more staff members, to conduct year-round trapping and testing, and a request to their respective Commissioners Courts for additional funding.

"Our initial meetings and discussions led us to the consensus that shifting the focus to the emergence of positive mosquitoes as an early indicator of West Nile virus activity would be a key first step. This step will help reduce the mosquito population and hopefully reduce the number of human cases," said Tarrant County Public Health Director Dr. Lou Brewer.

"Increased vigilance by all of us will help identify and eliminate mosquito breeding locations throughout the area and also give us an edge in our collective battle against West Nile," added Dallas County Health and Human Services Director Zachary Thompson.

"A major component of our unified approach will be the residents in each county," said Dr. Bing Burton, Denton County's Health Director. "We need their help in eliminating and reducing mosquito breeding areas in and around their homes." Burton also noted that this year would be the first time that Denton County has conducted mosquito surveillance.

"Knowing that people are crossing county boundaries daily makes it more important for us to be strategic in our actions," commented Collin County Health Care Services Director Candy Blair.

"This approach equals a combination of expertise and data collection that can only yield positives for the entire region," said Dr. James Zoretic, Regional Director of Texas Department of State Health Service Regions 2/3. "Moving forward, it will provide the needed continuity of information to identify the successes as well as the areas that need improvement."

All four counties will echo the prevention messages, which if followed, can help reduce human cases and reduce the opportunities for mosquitoes to breed.

About Collin County Health Care Services

Collin County Health Care Services (CCHCS) protects and promotes the health of the people of Collin County by providing quality, preventive Public Health Services to county residents. CCHCS is committed to continuous improvement in patient care and responsiveness to our community's needs.

About Dallas County Health and Human Services

Dallas County Health and Human Services strives to protect the health of the citizens of Dallas County through disease prevention and intervention, and through promotions of a healthy community and environment. This is done through assessment, community input education, disease monitoring, regulation, and health services that help control the spread of disease.

About Denton County Health Department

Denton County Health Department provides preventive public health services by: Assuring disease surveillance and working to prevent the spread of disease; protecting against environmental hazards; promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors; preparing and responding to disasters and assisting communities in recovery efforts.

About Tarrant County Public Health

Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) provides services to all Tarrant County residents aimed at promoting, achieving and maintaining a healthy standard of living. With a client base and scope of services as diverse as the county's population, TCPH services truly touch everyone, every day, everywhere.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Collin County – Eric Nishimoto, 972-548-4772; enishimoto@collincountytx.gov; www.collincountytx.gov
Dallas County – Pamela Smith, 214-819-6329; Pamela.smith@dallascounty.org; www.dallascounty.org/hhs
Denton County – Sarah McKinney, 940-349-2918; sarah.mckinney@dentoncounty.com; www.dentoncounty.com
Tarrant County – Vanassa Joseph, 817-321-5306; vljoseph@tarrantcounty.com; www.health.tarrantcounty.com
Texas Department of State Health Services – Carrie Williams, 512-776-7119; carrie.williams@dshs.state.tx.us;
www.dshs.state.tx.us