



# News Release

## Massachusetts Department of Public Health

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### For Immediate Release

## West Nile virus still active in Massachusetts

*Four more human cases identified*

**BOSTON** (October 12, 2018) - The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced four new human cases of West Nile virus this year in Massachusetts. They include a woman in her 50s from Middlesex County who was hospitalized, two men in their 60s from Middlesex County who were both hospitalized, and a woman in her 60s from Plymouth County who is hospitalized. A horse from Franklin County also died from the disease.

This brings the total number of reported West Nile virus human cases to 42 this year - the highest number of cases Massachusetts has ever recorded in a single year. The previous record was 33 cases in 2012.

“Mosquito season is winding down but mosquitoes will still be active on warmer and more humid days,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “In addition, the mosquitoes that are alive at this time of year are old for mosquitoes and are actually more likely to be carrying West Nile virus. Long sleeves and pants will help reduce bites and mosquito repellent may still be necessary when it is warm and humid.”

In 2017, there were six human cases of WNV infection identified in Massachusetts.

WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. Most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. When present, WNV symptoms tend to include fever and flu-like illness. In rare cases, more severe illness can occur.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes. To learn more, or to see all WNV and EEE positive results, visit the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at [www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito](http://www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito) or call the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

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