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For immediate release – Aug. 23, 2010

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ODH CONFIRMS 2010's FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS

Spike in West Nile-positive mosquitoes also reported

COLUMBUS – Ohio's first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in 2010 was confirmed today by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), which also reported a sharp increase in the number of WNV-positive mosquitoes.

The patient, a 74-year-old male from Putnam County, is currently recovering. Meanwhile, the number of WNV-positive mosquito pools in the State of Ohio increased from 4 to 98, in the past month.

Because humans can only get WNV from the bite of an infected mosquito, ODH reminds Ohioans to take steps to help prevent infection.

“We see human cases of West Nile virus each year in Ohio,” said ODH Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. “You can protect yourself and your loved ones from West Nile by taking simple protective steps such as using insect repellent and eliminating water –holding containers from your property.”

To avoid possible infection from mosquito bites: If you are outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, be sure to wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, shoes and socks. Light colors are least attractive to mosquitoes. Use insect repellent and follow the label directions.

To eliminate mosquito breeding sites near your home: Remove all discarded tires and other water-holding containers, such as tin cans and unused flower pots, from your property. Eliminate standing water from your property. Make sure all roof gutters are clean and properly draining. Clean and chlorinate pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs. Keep them empty when not in use and drain water from pool covers. Change water in bird baths weekly.

Ohio has recorded human cases of WNV each year since 2002 when there were 441 cases. There were 108 in 2003, 12 in 2004, 61 in 2005, 48 in 2006, 23 in 2007, 15 in 2008 and 2 in 2009. For more information, visit the ODH Web site at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov>.