

**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY SEPTEMBER 24, 2019**

AS EVERYONE IS AWARE, THE SUMMER AND EARLY FALL OF 2019 HAS BEEN AN EXCEPTIONALLY SEVERE YEAR FOR MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS; SPECIFICALLY EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS. ALTHOUGH EEE ACTIVITY IS HISTORICALLY FOCUSED IN BRISTOL AND PLYMOUTH COUNTIES, THIS DANGEROUS VIRUS HAS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH INTO AREAS NOT TYPICALLY IMPACTED. A COMBINATION OF WET WEATHER AND EXTREME HEAT HAS RESULTED IN A HIGH LEVEL OF VIRUS AMPLIFICATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT. AS A RESULT THERE HAVE BEEN 10 HUMAN CASES OF EEE WITH 3 FATALITIES TO DATE.

IN RESPONSE, THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH BEGAN AERIAL SPRAYING IN BRISTOL AND PLYMOUTH COUNTIES IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER. ADDITIONAL AERIAL SPRAYING WAS ALSO CONDUCTED IN NORFOLK, MIDDLESEX, HAMPDEN, HAMPSHIRE AND WORCESTER COUNTIES IN SEPTEMBER. THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN WAS SPRAYED IN ITS ENTIRETY ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2019. THE COMBINATION OF AERIAL AND GROUND SPRAYING, ALONG WITH DECREASING EVENING TEMPERATURES HAVE REDUCED MOSQUITO NUMBERS; HOWEVER THE THREAT WILL REMAIN UNTIL THE FIRST HARD FROST OF THE SEASON. A HARD FROST IS DEFINED AS A TEMPERATURE OF 32 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT FOR 3 CONSECUTIVE HOURS, OR A TEMPERATURE OF 28 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE HOURS.

ALTHOUGH THE THREAT HAS BEEN DIMINISHED SOMEWHAT, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR RESIDENTS TO CONTINUE TO TAKE ALL STEPS NECESSARY TO AVOID MOSQUITO BITES UNTIL THE FIRST HARD FROST OCCURS SOMETIME IN MID TO LATE OCTOBER. PLEASE CONTINUE TO USE A REPELLENT CONTAINING DEET, WEAR LONG SLEEVES SHIRTS AND LONG PANTS WHEN OUTDOORS. IF POSSIBLE, AVOID BEING OUTSIDE DURING PEAK MOSQUITO BITING TIMES BETWEEN DUSK AND DAWN.

IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR AREAS TO EXPERIENCE ELEVATED EEE VIRUS LEVELS IN CONSECUTIVE YEARS. AS SUCH, RESIDENTS SHOULD BE FULLY PREPARED TO RESPOND APPROPRIATELY NEXT SUMMER AS WELL.

DAVID E. MCKEARNEY, R.S.  
PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR  
FRANKLIN HEALTH DEPARTMENT