OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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John R. Kasich / Governor

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 13, 2012

TO: Healthcare providers in Ohio

FROM: Mary DiOrio, MD, MPH
State Epidemiologist
Medical Director, Division of Prevention

SUBJECT: Arboviral Testing

The Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) statewide surveillance has revealed an earlier and greater than normal increase in rate of mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus (WNV). In addition, Ohio's first cases of WNV (9) and La Crosse encephalitis virus (4) have been reported unusually early this year. Warmer than normal temperatures may be a contributing factor to the early amplification of arboviruses. In addition, the mosquitoes that transmit WNV are well suited to the dry conditions Ohio has experienced this year.

To develop a better understanding regarding arboviral disease activity in Ohio, ODH would like to ensure that all cases of arboviral disease are detected. For this reason, ODH would like to recommend that healthcare providers consider arboviral infections in the differential diagnosis for patients that are diagnosed with viral meningitis and encephalitis. Arboviral infections typically occur between May 15th and November 1st, with many of the infections occurring in the latter part of the season. The arboviral testing panel that would be recommended for consideration in Ohio patients with viral meningitis or encephalitis includes LaCrosse virus, St. Louis encephalitis virus, and West Nile virus. These arboviruses are endemic in Ohio and have shown a higher than normal amount of arbovirus activity this year compared to previous years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a press release for the increase in WNV activity, which can be accessed at http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2012/p0801_west_nile.html.

Please contact the ODH's Outbreak Response and Bioterrorism Investigation Team (ORBIT) at 614-995-5599 if you have questions. Thank you for your consideration to improving arboviral disease surveillance in Ohio.

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