



For Immediate Release

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CDC Report Finds California Has Highest Number of Mosquito-Transmitted Disease Cases in the Nation

Sacramento, June 20, 2018 – California leads the nation in mosquito-borne disease cases over the last decade, according to new data from the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The State reported 9,254 cases of mosquito-transmitted diseases between 2004 and 2016, followed by New York with 7,167 and Texas with 6,648. California had 100 times more mosquito-transmitted disease cases than Alaska (87), which reported the lowest number of cases in the country during the same period. The report included the total number of local and travel-associated disease transmission cases per state and did not adjust for population.

“These numbers are startling as they only represent mosquito-transmitted diseases that were reported to health officials said,” David Heft, president of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California. “Also not reflected in the data are the emerging disease threats the state faces due to the rise of invasive mosquitoes now present in 12 counties in Southern and Central California.”

Two invasive mosquito species, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*, have been found in nearly 200 California cities and designated census areas since 2011 and they continue to spread throughout the state. Both invasive mosquito species are capable of transmitting viruses that are dangerous to people such as chikungunya, dengue, and Zika. Mosquitoes that are native to California are capable of infecting people with West Nile virus, which can cause debilitating cases of meningitis, encephalitis, and even death.

Vector control agencies have been working closely with public health officials to expand the toolbox of mosquito surveillance and control strategies. At the federal level, enhanced mosquito detection and suppression efforts have been funded by CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Grants. The grant funds have supported additional surveillance, control personnel, abatement equipment, community outreach, and education campaigns.

“It is critical that the federal ELC grant funds are secured and increased to support this vital public health work,” said Heft. “Specifically, we hope our legislators will pass the federal bill [Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act](#), which is essential to maintaining and enhancing local resources to fight mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases.”

Mosquito control is a shared responsibility and [National Mosquito Control Awareness Week](#), June 24-30, 2018, is an important way to raise awareness and educate residents about the public health threat mosquitoes pose to our communities. Residents are encouraged to integrate mosquito control into community events, support legislation to increase funding for mosquito control and prevention, and take preventative measures to minimize exposure to mosquito bites including:

1. Apply insect repellent containing EPA-registered active ingredients, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep mosquitoes from biting. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
2. Dress in long sleeves and pants.
3. Install screens on windows and doors and keep them in good repair.
4. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including in flower pots, old tires, and buckets.
5. Repair leaking faucets and broken sprinklers.
6. Clean rain gutters clogged with leaves.
7. Report neglected swimming pools and day-biting mosquitoes to your local mosquito and vector control agency.

For additional information on mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/MosquitoesandMosquitoBorneDiseases.aspx>

To increase awareness and enforce prevention and control programs statewide, the [Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California](#) (MVCAC) provides support to more than 65 districts throughout California. As a result, approximately half the land area and 85 percent of California's population are within the boundaries of a mosquito control program.

MVCAC represents special districts, other subdivisions of local government, and the state of California which are responsible for mosquito and vector control, surveillance of West Nile Virus and other vector-borne diseases, as well as public education programs to help Californians protect themselves from disease. MVCAC advocates safe, effective, and environmentally friendly methods of mosquito and vector control.

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