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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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**FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
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**STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE FIRST EEE-POSITIVE  
MOSQUITOES OF THE SEASON**

*Residents urged to cover up, wear bug spray to avoid getting bitten*

**BOSTON** – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) has been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts for the first time this year in testing done at the State Laboratory Institute. The mosquito samples were collected on July 9 in the town of Easton in Bristol County. Two of the four positive mosquito samples are in a mammal-biting kind of mosquito, a point of particular concern to health officials.

“Today is our first indication this year that EEE is circulating in our environment, and it’s circulating early,” said DPH State Epidemiologist Dr. Al DeMaria “This is also an important reminder for individuals to take simple, common-sense steps to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes.”

There have been no human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) or EEE so far this year. There were two cases of EEE in August of last year acquired in Massachusetts; a fatal case in a Bristol County man and an infection in a tourist from out-of-state. EEE activity in both 2010 and 2011 raised public concern and prompted DPH to work with a panel of experts to evaluate and enhance the state’s surveillance and response program. EEE is usually spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE is a serious disease in all ages and can even cause death.

With these findings, DPH officials are raising the threat of mosquito-borne illness in the towns of Easton, Raynham, and Taunton from “moderate” to “high”, which will prompt immediate discussions with other state agencies and local officials about necessary and appropriate mosquito control activities in those towns. State officials are recommending that the communities designated as “high” risk curtail evening events for the remainder of the summer.

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### **First EEE Mosquito Samples, page 2 of 3**

The seven communities that are contiguous to these three towns remain at “moderate” risk at the present time; however state officials will closely monitor mosquito activity in those areas throughout the remaining mosquito season. These cities and towns include Bridgewater, Brockton, Mansfield, Norton, Sharon, Stoughton, and West Bridgewater. DPH recommends that communities designated as “moderate” or “high” risk actively educate the public about the importance of personal protective measures and work closely with their local mosquito control projects regarding ground spraying of pesticide.

No matter where they live, individuals should continue to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites and the illnesses they can cause, including:

#### **Avoid Mosquito Bites**

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

#### **Mosquito-Proof Your Home**

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

#### **Protect Your Animals**

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at

**First EEE Mosquito Samples, page 3 of 3**

least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. If an animal is diagnosed with WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results from 2012, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at [www.mass.gov/dph/wnv](http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv) or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

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**From the Town of Walpole**

**Walpole's Health Director, Robin Chapell, would like to add, that although the Town of Walpole is not curtailing evening activity at this time, the Health Department closely monitors all mosquito trap data in our community, and will advocate any further steps when or if necessary. In the meantime, it is strongly encouraged that everyone in the Walpole Community be familiar with how to avoid mosquito bites, mosquito-proofing your home, and how to protect your animals from mosquitoes, all outlined in the letter above. Of course, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Health Department at 508-660-7321.**

**Title of Press Release, page 2 of 2**

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