

Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

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Public Health Advisory

Monday, August 13, 2018 - 1pm

Regional Arboviral Activity

Providers Advised to Consider POW and WNV for patients presenting with viral encephalitis or meningitis

Background:

The Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) recently confirmed a case of Powassan (POW) Virus in a Dutchess County resident, the second case diagnosed in the state for 2018. The patient likely contracted the virus in the late spring and is currently recovering at home.

West Nile Virus (WNV) activity has also been detected in mosquito pools in multiple nearby counties as well as in Connecticut. To date in 2018, New York has had one case of WNV diagnosed in a person from New York City.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER GUIDANCE

- ▶ Providers are advised to consider arboviruses in the differential diagnosis for patients with clinical evidence of viral encephalitis or viral meningitis. Other symptoms include fever, headache, vomiting, generalized weakness and seizures.
- ▶ Commercial laboratory testing for POW is not available. The NYSDOH's Wadsworth Center laboratory offers testing for POW and domestic mosquito-borne viruses, including WNV and EEE.
- ▶ CSF testing by PCR is more sensitive early in infection. Serologic testing better detects cases beyond the early acute phase. Ideally, both CSF and acute and convalescent serum specimens drawn at least 3 weeks apart should be submitted when neuroinvasive disease is suspected.
- ▶ The Wadsworth Center has a detailed testing algorithm and instructions for collection and submission of clinical specimens. The Viral Encephalitis/Meningitis Case Report and History Forms can be found at www.wadsworth.org/programs/id/virology/services/arbovirus-testing.

NYS Public Health Law requires healthcare providers to immediately report any suspected viral encephalitis cases to the local health department. To report suspected cases and access assistance in coordinating sample submission to the Wadsworth Center call the DBCH at (845) 486-3402.

This advisory summarizes the NYSDOH annual Provider guidance on testing and reporting of mosquito and tick-borne disease. The complete NYSDOH guidance and other useful information can be found on our Vector-borne & Zoonotics page located at: DutchessNY.gov/Providers.