

# Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

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## Public Health Update

Friday, October 20, 2017 - 1 pm

### POWASSAN CASE CONFIRMED IN DUTCHESS COUNTY

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) report a confirmed case of Powassan (POW) Virus in a Dutchess County resident. This brings the total number cases reported in 2017 in New York State to four, including three cases reported among Saratoga County residents in July.

Healthcare providers are reminded to emphasize tick-bite prevention with their patients because adult ticks are active during the fall, when residents are likely to participate in outdoor seasonal activities such as hunting, pumpkin picking, and more.

Prevention practices include use of EPA-registered insect repellent, permethrin treated clothing, and frequent body checks for ticks. Tick-borne disease prevention and provider resources can be found at: [DutchessNY.gov/BeTickFree](http://DutchessNY.gov/BeTickFree).

NYSDOH Provider guidance regarding POW diagnosis and treatment was released earlier this year and can be found at: [https://apps.health.ny.gov/pub/ctrl/docs/alertview/postings/Notification\\_22618.pdf](https://apps.health.ny.gov/pub/ctrl/docs/alertview/postings/Notification_22618.pdf)

- Consider POW in the differential diagnosis of any adult or pediatric patient with encephalitis, meningitis, or meningoencephalitis. Initial symptoms include fever, headache, vomiting and generalized weakness. The disease usually progresses to meningoencephalitis, which may include meningeal signs, altered mental status, seizures, aphasia, paresis, movement disorders, or cranial nerve paresis.
- 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.
- Commercial laboratory testing for POW is not available. **Testing at NYSDOH's Wadsworth Center may be accessed through consultation with DBCH at (845) 486-3402.**
- **NYS Public Health Law requires healthcare providers to immediately report any suspected viral encephalitis cases. To report suspected POW cases, call the Department at (845) 486-3402.**