



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY USES MOBILE TECHNOLOGY TO ALERT RESIDENTS ***Text Alerts Can Warn Residents When Certain Areas Test Positive for West Nile Virus***

The County Department of Environmental Health added another tool today to its arsenal in the fight against West Nile virus -- text alerts to warn residents about West Nile virus in their neighborhoods.

By texting **PEST to 75309** users will be able to receive messages that provide information about West Nile virus. For example, you might receive a location where birds or mosquitoes have tested positive for West Nile virus or you might receive tips on how to prevent the disease.

"The County has always tried to stay ahead of fast-changing technology and with these alerts, we will be able to help protect more people from this serious, sometimes deadly disease," said Supervisor Greg Cox, District 1.

"Sharing important information, to help prevent this debilitating disease is an exciting prospect because we will be able to use this texting tool to communicate with the public about our other programs as well," said Jack Miller, Director of the Department of Environmental Health. "Once received, text messages can then be forwarded to others within a family or group of friends."

The County also plans to use text messages to make the community aware of other vector-borne disease such as hantavirus and plague. Within the next month, DEH will unveil a new mobile Web site that can be viewed on all smartphones. A mobile Web site is a site that is optimized for viewing and use on a mobile phone.

Text Message Stats:

- There has been a 107 percent increase in text message use in the U.S. in the past year.
- There are 2.5 billion text messages sent each day in the U.S.
- More text messages are sent per phone than phone calls. The average text messages used per month is 357 compared to 204 cell phone calls.

For more information about how you can sign up for WNV text alerts, visit www.SDFightTheBite.com.

Editor's Note: Media event today at 11:30 a.m. at 3218 Summit Meadow Road at the Sweetwater County Regional Park in Bonita near the Kumeyaay Indian Village display. Thomas Brothers 1291-

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