



# OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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John R. Kasich / Governor

Theodore E. Wymyslo, M.D. / Director of Health

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Dear Health Commissioners,

As you are aware, the Zoonotic Disease Program (ZDP) at the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) was heavily impacted during the biennium budget for 2012-2013. At that time, ODH was able to maintain mosquito and tick identification services, as well as arbovirus testing of mosquitoes with available federal funds and a stock of testing supplies. Unfortunately, laboratory testing supplies were exhausted during the 2012 West Nile virus (WNV) outbreak.

Mosquito surveillance is one component of local health jurisdictions' WNV response plans. Other components include education to prevent mosquito bites and to reduce mosquito breeding sites and community-based mosquito control programs that may include larvaciding and adulticiding field activities. While mosquito surveillance is a valuable part of WNV response planning, the federal government has cut funding to this area and ODH does not have other funds available to support this activity.

I regret to officially inform you that due to the reduction in federal funds, starting in spring 2013, the following services will no longer be available:

- **Mosquito arbovirus testing**

ODH will no longer provide testing of mosquitoes

Weekly statewide arbovirus activity/surveillance updates will not be issued

Mosquito identification and testing options: In order to determine infection rates, it is critical that mosquitoes are correctly identified and tested by species (there are 59 species of mosquito in Ohio). ODH is exploring the possibility of offering a few mosquito identification clinics at ODH

- There are a variety of test kits (e.g. RAMP, VecToR Test Systems) that can be purchased for mosquito testing, but our recommendation is to use a qualified service that provides both identification and testing.
- Mosquito control agencies could check with their control vendors (Clarke, Univar, etc.) who may provide identification and testing or may be able to point them to a service.
- PCR is the gold standard, where RAMP and other test kits sometimes give false results. If PCR is desired and unavailable through private services, our recommendation is to check with other state public health labs which continue to provide mosquito testing.

- **Mosquito, tick and insect identification service for local health departments**

ODH will no longer provide mosquito, tick and insect identification services

Options:

- Tick identification quick key available on ODH website. It covers the 3 most common species. It is important to note that positive identification of the blacklegged tick, which looks very similar to 9 other Ohio species, may require a qualified entomologist.
- Samples may be sent to the C. Wayne Ellett Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic for a fee of \$20 per sample: <http://ppdc.osu.edu/> You may have other local options you wish to pursue for testing samples.

ODH will look at the possibility of reinstating these services if the federal government restores funding.

Please note that ODH will maintain public health entomology expertise so that consultations with local health departments and cooperators can continue as needed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Richard Gary, State Public Health Entomologist, at [richard.gary@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:richard.gary@odh.ohio.gov).

Sincerely,



Theodore W. Wymyslo, M.D.  
Director of Health

C: Zoonotic Disease Program Cooperators