Two out of six tested pools of mosquitoes in Chase County have tested positive for West Nile Virus according to the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. This follows two reported cases in Hamilton County and Butler County of men, both over the age of 50, testing positive for West Nile Virus according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

“West Nile Virus spreads when mosquitoes get the virus from infected birds and pass it on to other birds, animals and people,” states Helena Janousek, Health Educator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “There is no vaccine, but there are simple steps you can take to avoid getting the virus.”

To avoid mosquito bites, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services recommends:

- Applying mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus
- Wearing long-sleeved shirt, pants and socks
- Avoiding going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active
- Eliminate standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites

“It is important to take the necessary precautions to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes,” states Myra Stoney, Director at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “West Nile Virus is not limited to the locations which have positive tested pools of mosquitoes.”

Symptoms of West Nile Virus can vary, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

- Most people, approximately 80 percent or 4 out of 5 who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.
- Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected, have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.
- A few people, about one in 150 people will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis.

More information on West Nile Virus may be found on the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department website at www.swhealth.ne.gov or by calling call the McCook office at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street in McCook – one block north of Arby's. The organization also has a presence on Facebook & Twitter.