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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ORANGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES RESIDENTS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM  
MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES**

**Hillsborough, NC** (July 23, 2014) – The Orange County Health Department is asking residents to take active precautions against mosquito-borne illnesses such as [chikungunya](#) and [West Nile virus](#). This comes less than one week after the first domestically acquired cases of chikungunya were confirmed in Florida.

Central North Carolina is currently experiencing an increased amount of rain. Standing water and wet conditions are the perfect breeding ground for mosquitos. It only takes approximately one week for a mosquito to grow from egg to adult, which is why it is important to empty standing water, even as rain continues.

The first step in reducing the risk for mosquito bites is to minimize the amount of standing water by walking around your personal, as well as business, property daily to empty any containers that may be collecting rain water.

The following tips will help in reducing the risk for mosquito bites:

- Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs
- Reduce time spent outdoors, particularly during early morning and early evening hours when mosquitos are most active
- Apply EPA-approved mosquito repellents to exposed skin
- Clean overgrown ponds and stock with fish
- Change water in birdbaths, weekly
- Ensure your window screens fit properly and do not have holes

About Chikungunya and West Nile Virus

[Chikungunya](#), also known as CHIKV – Chikungunya is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. The Asian tiger mosquito that is commonly found in North Carolina could effectively transmit

the virus, though no cases have been found to date. Symptoms of the virus usually appear three to seven days after being bitten and typically include the sudden onset of fever and severe, often disabling joint pain in hands and feet. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. In late 2013, chikungunya first appeared in the Americas on islands in the Caribbean. The first two cases of infection transmitted within the United States were in Florida last week. North Carolina has had 11 cases of chikungunya to date, but all have been in travelers who returned to the state after becoming infected.

[West Nile Virus](#) – West Nile virus is most commonly transmitted to humans by mosquitos. According to the CDC, 70-80% of people who become infected with West Nile virus do not develop symptoms. One in five people who are infected will develop a fever and other symptoms such as head and body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea and rash.

For more information about other mosquito-borne diseases and prevention visit <http://www.mosquito.org/mosquito-borne-diseases>

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