

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

November 15, 2012

For Immediate Release

'Fight the Bite' Signs Alert Public to Mosquito and Tick Threats

The Oneida County Health Department has received 84 signs alerting the public to "Fight the Bite" and the threat of mosquito and tick-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus (WNV), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and Lyme Disease. This year Oneida County was one of four targeted counties which worked in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to prevent arboviruses in their communities.

The brightly painted metal signs describing measures one should take to avoid being bitten by disease infected insects will be posted in areas of public access like parks, nature trails and campgrounds throughout Oneida County before next years' mosquito and tick season.

Funding for the signage was arranged through the offices of State Senator Patty Ritchie of Oswego County. Ritchie orchestrated a regional approach to combating mosquito-borne diseases that included Oneida, Onondaga, Madison and Oswego counties following the death of a 4-year old Oswego County child in 2011 attributed to EEE.

Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. said the signs are part of the county's commitment to community education and public health. *"I want to thank Senator Ritchie for her work in bringing this partnership together so that we can take a regional action to help the people of our communities become fully aware of the public health issues that can be raised by insect-borne diseases. Oneida County's Health Department has been a leader in the effort to take pro-active steps to promote public health and protection, and this is just another step in that effort."*

Each year the Oneida County Health Department conducts a mosquito surveillance program throughout the summer that involves weekly trapping of mosquitoes at various sites and testing them for any mosquito-borne disease. No positive specimens for EEE or West Nile Virus were found in Oneida County in 2012.

During mosquito season, the public is urged to limit outdoor activity at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, cover as much skin as possible and use repellent containing DEET. People should also eliminate sources of standing water around their property which serve as breeding areas for mosquitoes. To avoid tick bites people should use repellents; avoid areas of high grass and walk in the middle of trails when hiking; and check yourself, your children and pets for ticks regularly. Remove attached ticks by grasping them with a tweezers as close to the head parts as possible.

For more information visit our web site at ocgov.net/oneida/health.