WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Williamson County and Cities Health District Expands Mosquito Testing Countywide

More areas of Williamson County are now being tested for mosquito-borne illnesses as a result of an expanded mosquito prevention program conducted by the Williamson County and Cities Health District (WCCHD). The Integrated Mosquito Management Program utilizes a comprehensive management strategy to identify and monitor mosquitoes that carry arboviruses, alert and educate citizens about personal protection, and test mosquitoes throughout the county weekly for the presence of West Nile virus. The expansion of the program includes the hiring of a full-time Program Specialist to set mosquito traps at locations throughout the county, submit the specimens to the Texas Department of State Health Services for testing, and use geographic information systems (GIS) to monitor mosquito populations. WCCHD Assistant Deputy Director Deborah Marlow says, “It is nearly impossible to eliminate the threat of mosquito-borne illnesses throughout the county, but our expanded evidence based mosquito surveillance capabilities this year will allow us to collect more data and control and manage the threat.”

The Integrated Mosquito Management Program is funded and supported locally by the county and participating cities in Williamson County including Georgetown, which partnered with WCCHD in 2013 for a pilot study to monitor mosquitoes and educate the public through Fight the Bite, a public education campaign with tips on how to stay safe during the peak hours of mosquito activity. In 2012, WCCHD reported twelve confirmed West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease cases, including one confirmed death. No West Nile cases were reported in Williamson County in 2013.

Fight The Bite encourages public awareness of the four D’s:

- **Dawn and Dusk** are the times to try to stay indoors since mosquitoes are most active at those times
- **Dress** in long sleeves and pants when outdoors
- **Drain** standing water in flower pots, pet dishes, or clogged gutters so mosquitoes cannot lay eggs
- **Defend** using an EPA-approved insect repellant

For information and updates on the West Nile Virus and mosquito control efforts in Williamson County, visit the WCCHD website at [www.wcchd.org](http://www.wcchd.org). For more information the state’s response to the West Nile virus, go to the Texas Department of State Health Services website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us).