Preventing West Nile Virus

Dear members of the Boston College Campus Community:

Recently news media have highlighted the threat of West Nile Virus around the country. Late on August 29th, state health officials announced that Newton has been raised to a “high” threat level for West Nile Virus. Boston is also in a high threat level as of last week. Since the Boston College campus is located in both communities, we wanted to bring this matter to your attention. We are sharing this information so you can take simple, common-sense steps to protect against mosquito bites, the manner in which the virus is usually spread.

West Nile Virus (WNV)
According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, “while WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. When present, WNV symptoms tend to include fever and flu-like illness. In rare cases, more severe illness can occur.” West Nile Virus should not be confused with Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), a more serious mosquito-borne disease that has been detected in other Massachusetts communities some distance from the Boston College campuses.

Preventing West Nile Virus: Avoid Mosquito Bites
Public health officials advise:

- **Apply insect repellent when outdoors.** Use a repellent containing DEET according to the instructions on the product label.
- **Many mosquitoes are most active from dusk, through the evening and into dawn.** Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- **Get rid of mosquito breeding sites** by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels.

Campus Actions
The most important action is for individuals to prevent mosquito bites. Facilities Services is alert to eliminating standing water on campus to reduce mosquito breeding grounds. University officials have reviewed guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and neither agency recommends curtailing evening outdoor organized events in communities affected by West Nile Virus. At this time campus events will proceed as scheduled.

Updates and More Information
We will continue to monitor the situation. You may receive additional email communication if updates are necessary. For more information please visit:

http://bc.edu/uhs
http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv

Sincerely,

Tom Nary, MD
Director Health Services