



TOWN OF ANDOVER

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ANDOVER BOARD OF HEALTH **ARBOVIRUS RESPONSE PLAN**

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Revised June 12, 2017

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Revised October 14, 2023

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to map out a response to potential public health issues related to arboviruses such as West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). These viruses are mosquito borne and therefore may be transmitted to humans. This plan will detail a measured response based on threat to the public health.

The Town contracts annually with the Northeast Mosquito Control and Wetlands Management District (District) to handle mosquito control activities. Due to the large area of watershed protection for both the Town and Tewksbury Hospital water supplies, limited adulticiding is conducted; most control efforts are for larvae. The primary focus of control efforts will be on ground larviciding, catch basin treatments, and virus intervention for WNV and EEE.

Mosquito trapping, sorting, and testing activities are carried out by both the District and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). These entities determine when and where to place traps, based on their best professional judgment.

Climate Change Implications

Current climate change implications include increased ambient temperatures that allow insect vectors such as mosquitos and ticks to expand their territorial coverage, thereby introducing new illnesses to the environment where we have never seen them before; examples include the expansion of mosquitos that carry the Zika Virus, and ticks that carry Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Rainstorms have also increased in their severity, providing water to areas where mosquito larvae can grow and increase the adult mosquito population; this increase can help to amplify any virus found in the environment.

Reference Materials

This response plan is based on a compilation of documents, including the MA Surveillance and Response Plan for Mosquito-Borne Disease, the District Vector Management Plan, the Annual Best Management Plan (BMP) for Andover, past experience and practice within the Town of Andover, and sound judgment in providing a measured response.

Pre-detection Activities

Beginning June 1st of each year, and continuing until a virus is isolated in a mosquito pool, the primary departmental activities shall be that of education.

- Press releases will discuss the danger of arboviruses, how to eliminate mosquito-breeding areas (artificial containers), and how to protect against mosquito bite exposure while emphasizing personal prevention strategies, particularly to those populations at higher risk for severe disease (e.g., the elderly, school children, workers employed in outdoor occupations).
- Information and appropriate links will be placed onto the town website and social media.
- Information will be posted through the Bartlet Street Dispatch and provided to local media via the town’s Communications Director.
- Speakers may be engaged to bring the subject matter to audiences at the library, senior center, and other outlets.
- This information may be provided to the E-911 Dispatchers for their information.
- Field staff and/or Mosquito Control District personnel will investigate complaints of potential mosquito breeding areas, and will identify them as they visit any site for any reason. Property owners will be educated on the importance of elimination of the hazard, but failure of the property owner to properly address the matter will result in the issuance of a Notice to Abate a Nuisance.

In addition to solely education, MDPH alongside Andover’s local health department will continue to identify and support the use of safe and effective mosquito control measures.

Response to a Positive Mosquito Pool

If a mosquito pool tests positive for either WNV or EEE, the following shall occur:

- The following persons shall be immediately advised:
 - Health Department Staff
 - Board of Health Members
 - Town Manager
 - Deputy Town Manager
 - Assistant Town Manager
 - Superintendent of Schools
 - Recreation Director
 - Mosquito Control District
 - Fire Chief
 - Police Chief
 - Director of Facilities
 - Director of Public Works
 - Animal Control Officer
 - Athletic Directors of the following Schools:
 - Andover Public Schools
 - Greater Lawrence Technical School
 - Phillips Academy Andover
 - Pike School
 - Merrimack College
 - Health Officers of the following Communities:
 - N. Andover
 - Lawrence
 - Methuen
 - Tewksbury
 - Wilmington
 - N. Reading
- MDPH’s Risk Level Guidance will be used to guide the response, including decisions to treat areas, conduct education, and to limit evening activities. As risk levels increase, staff should be reviewing the guidance for the next risk level and should be prepared to implement new restrictions.

- A press release will be issued providing information on the positive pool, including the general neighborhood it was found in (note that sometimes, it is best to not provide this location so as to encourage residents to take protective measures wherever they go). Public education activities will reaffirm the information provided prior to the identification of case.
- The website will be updated, as will social media. Social Media will need to be monitored in the days following any posts to offer real-time response and education.
- If spraying will be conducted, the town's GIS staff will develop a map showing treatment areas for posting to the website and social media; the Code Red notification system will be used to disseminate information.
- Public Advisories may be distributed to the Conservation Commission, School Department, and Youth Sports programs to be posted at playing fields and appropriate trailheads.
- Local municipalities may be encouraged to reschedule outdoor evening events to avoid the period between dusk and dawn which correspond to peak mosquito activity. This recommendation should take into account the time of year the isolation has been identified, evening temperatures, and the number of actual positive mosquito pools not only in Andover, but in the region.
- Routine collection and testing of mosquitoes will continue.
- A Mosquito Control Working Group may be formed to determine a course of action to respond to the threat. Consideration will be given to the time of year the positive pool is identified, the length of remaining season of mosquito activity, and region wide activity. Members of the Working Group will be:
 - Director of Public Health or Designee
 - Board of Health Chairman or Designee
 - Town Manager

Additional Members may include:

- Representative of Andover Public Schools
 - Director of Conservation
 - Director of the Mosquito Control District
 - Representative of MDPH if available
 - Up to 3 residents selected by the Health Director and Board of Health Chairman
- The Mosquito Control Working Group, as advised by MDPH, will be charged with the following activities:
 - Reviewing current public notification techniques.
 - Recommending further public notification techniques.
 - Reviewing current mosquito control techniques.
 - Recommending stepped-up mosquito control techniques.
 - Identifying possible habitat/potential breeding sites, including abandoned properties, and initiate clean up.
 - Determining if truck based or aerial adulticiding is warranted.
 - Determining if barrier spraying of athletic fields is warranted.

- If adulticiding is warranted, determining the area to be treated, with respect to no-spray zones.
- If adulticiding is warranted, determining the timetable for such treatment, as well as how the public will be notified (i.e. – Reverse 911).

Response to a Region-wide Threat

If there is a region-wide threat not necessarily found yet in Andover, the Director of Public Health will participate in any regional meeting of health departments to discuss a regional response. If this regional meeting results in a recommendation for action to be taken by Andover, the Mosquito Control Working Group outlined above may be assembled. It is recommended that weekly conference calls for the region be scheduled to ensure communications are appropriate and consistent.

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In August of each year, the Director of Public Health will review known data on arbovirus activity in the region. If there is an indication of increased activity, the Mosquito Control Working Group outlined above may be assembled to discuss pre-emptive action at recreational fields.

Response to Pre-emptive Treatment of Recreational Fields

If it is determined that pre-emptive treatment is required, the following will occur:

- The following people will be notified:
 - Director of Facilities
 - Superintendent of Schools
 - Phillips Academy
 - Pike School
 - Greater Lawrence Vo-Tech

- Notice of treatment will be provided as follows:
 - If needed, notices will be sent home with students.
 - Cable television message boards
 - Town and School Websites and social media
 - Posting of site as required
 - Notification of athletic programs using the fields.

TICK-BORNE ILLNESSES

Tick borne illnesses such as Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis, and Rocky Mounted Spotted Fever, are also considered to be arboviruses. Climate change has increased the geographic territory of ticks and provides more favorable conditions for ticks to propagate, thus increasing the prevalence of these illnesses in New England.

Surveillance

Tick-borne illnesses are surveilled through laboratory testing when humans are diagnosed with an illness. There is no current program to collect and test ticks for disease due to the wide-spread habitat for ticks.

Monitoring of community and state-wide reportable diseases will be the warning system for these types of illnesses, but it is noted that many residents enjoy the outdoors in venues outside of Andover, making it hard to understand where a potential exposure has occurred.

Education

Educational efforts will continue, with periodic notices for persons to conduct tick checks after being outside, wearing appropriate clothing, and to use appropriate insect repellent.