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Reporting West Nile and Other Arboviral Infections

In November 2002, the Georgia Department of Human Resources Board approved a change in the reporting requirements regarding West Nile and other arboviral illnesses. Previously, only cases of encephalitis caused by arboviruses (arthropod-borne viruses) were reportable; now *all arboviral infections* are notifiable to public health in Georgia. The Georgia Department of Public Health requested this change in reporting requirements because only a very small percentage of cases of illness caused by arboviruses lead to severe disease such as encephalitis. Therefore, surveillance was only detecting the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of the true burden of disease caused by arboviruses in Georgia. It is necessary to accurately assess the burden of arboviral disease in Georgia in order to plan public education and mosquito control programs. *Arboviral infections must be reported to public health immediately*.

Frequently Asked Questions

What arboviral infections are reportable?
Any acute infection with an arbovirus (arthropod-borne virus) must be immediately reported to public health. The arboviruses that are typically found in Georgia include West Nile virus (WNV), Saint Louis Encephalitis virus (SLE), Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus (EEE), Lacrosse Encephalitis virus (LAC), and possibly Western Equine Encephalitis virus (WEE).

What information should be reported and to whom do I report it?
When reporting a notifiable condition, the following information should be included:

- The disease or condition, including causative agent (e.g., encephalitis caused by West Nile virus)
- Patient's name
- Patient's address, phone, and date of birth
- Physician's name and phone
- Name, institution, and phone of person reporting
- Whether the patient died
- Patient's pregnancy status

In addition, when reporting cases of arboviral illness please note whether the patient has received transfused blood or blood products or transplanted organs within the previous 4 weeks or whether the patient has donated blood within the previous 4 weeks. This information should be reported to the local county health department, district health office, or Georgia Department of Public Health Epidemiology Branch.

How do I report a notifiable disease?
Notification can be made by filling out a Notifiable Disease Report Form and mailing it to the county health department, district health office, or state Department of Public Health. More rapid notification may be made by faxing reports, calling in reports, or entering reports through the State Electronic Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (SENDSS) at https://sendss.state.ga.us. The Georgia Department of Public Health fax number for arboviral reporting is 404-656-4278 and the phone number is 404-657-2588. Healthcare providers and laboratories are protected from liability when reporting required information to public health.