

Massachusetts Public Health reports five additional vaping injury cases to US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Monday reported five additional cases of vaping-associated pulmonary injury – two confirmed, three probable – to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), bringing the statewide total of reported cases to 10. Five of the cases are confirmed and five are considered probable for meeting the CDC's **definition** of vaping-associated lung injury. To date, 83 suspected vaping-related pulmonary cases have been reported to DPH since September 11.

Among the 10 confirmed and probable cases, most patients are under the age of 20 (50 percent) and between the ages of 40 and 49 (30 percent). The remaining 20 percent are between the ages of 20 and 39. In contrast to national cases, 7 of the 10 Massachusetts cases are female. Eight out of the ten (80 percent) cases have been hospitalized.

Vaping tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an ingredient found in marijuana, was reported in half of the 10 cases – while vaping THC and nicotine were reported in 40 percent of the cases; the remaining 10 percent reported vaping nicotine only.

Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel has mandated that Massachusetts clinicians immediately report any unexplained vaping-associated lung injury to the department. Of the 83 suspect cases reported to DPH, 51 are still being investigated, with Massachusetts DPH officials collecting

medical records and conducting patient interviews. Twenty-two cases did not meet the official CDC definitions. The other 10 were reported to the CDC.

With the number of suspect cases rising statewide and nationally, Governor Charlie Baker last week **announced** a public health emergency and a four-month statewide ban on sales of all vaping products in Massachusetts. The sales ban applies to all vaping devices and products, including those containing nicotine or cannabis.

“While no one has pinpointed the exact cause of this outbreak of illness, we do know that vaping and e-cigarettes are the common thread and are making people sick,” Commissioner Bharel said. “The information we’re gathering about cases in Massachusetts will further our understanding of vaping-associated lung injury, as well as assist our federal partners.”

The Massachusetts cases are among the hundreds of cases the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration are currently investigating as part of a multi-state outbreak of lung disease that has been associated with the use of e-cigarettes or vaping products, including devices, liquids, refill pods, and/or cartridges.

As of last week, 805 confirmed and probable cases of lung injury associated with e-cigarette product use or vaping had been **reported** to the CDC by 46 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Those cases included 12 deaths in 10 states (CA (2), GA, FL, IL, IN, KS (2), MN, MO, MS, OR).

More than two-thirds of patients nationally are male. The median age of cases is 23 years, with about 62 percent of patients between the ages of 18 and 34, according to the CDC. Many of the patients reported recent use of THC-containing products, while some reported using both THC and nicotine products. No single product has been linked to all cases of

lung injury.

As a result of Massachusetts' public health emergency, the Commonwealth implemented a statewide standing order for nicotine replacement products that will allow people to access over-the-counter-products like gum and patches as a covered benefit through their insurance without requiring an individual prescription, similar to what the Baker Administration did to increase access to naloxone, the opioid reversal medication. Individuals who are vaping are encouraged to call the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit makingsmokinghistory.org or Mass.gov/QuitVaping to connect to treatment.

Also this week the state is relaunching two public awareness campaigns, "Different Products, Same Danger" and "The New Look of Nicotine Addiction, aimed at educating parents and middle and high school-aged youth about the dangers of vaping, which will appear on social media channels and billboards statewide. More information on both campaigns is available at getoutraged.org. Materials are also available for download on the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse website.

DPH also has guidance for local boards of health, health care providers, and retailers on its website at mass.gov/vapingemergency.

State public health officials announce 11th human case of

EEE and fourth death in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing has confirmed the 11th human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a man in his 70s from Worcester County. As a result, the communities of Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, Leicester, Southbridge and Spencer have been elevated to high risk.

DPH also has been recently notified by a hospital of a death from EEE of an Essex County resident. It marks the fourth EEE death this year in Massachusetts.

“Although mosquito populations are declining at this time of year, risk from EEE will continue until the first hard frost,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine Brown. “We continue to emphasize the need for people to protect themselves from mosquito bites.”

There are 35 communities now at critical risk, 46 at high risk, and 122 at moderate risk for the EEE virus in Massachusetts. A map of the state’s current EEE risk levels can be found **here**.

In addition to the 11 human cases of EEE this season in Massachusetts, there have also been eight confirmed cases of EEE this year in animals – seven horses and a goat.

State officials continue to remind residents to take personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Residents can learn more about EEE and ways to protect themselves on DPH’s **website**.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring

from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 422 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. An additional 83 mosquitos have tested positive for West Nile Virus.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has now completed aerial spraying for mosquitoes for the season. Aerial spraying has been conducted in parts of Bristol, Plymouth, Middlesex, Norfolk, Worcester, Hampden, and Hampshire counties. Aerial spraying helps reduce risk of EEE transmission but some risk will continue to exist until there is a hard frost. For information on spraying activities that were conducted during this season, visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/eee.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours

The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites

Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets about EEE in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage www.mass.gov/eee.

State officials announce 10th human case, second EEE death

in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing has confirmed the 10th human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a man in his 70s from Bristol County. The hospital has reported to DPH that the patient died as a result of his illness.

DPH has also confirmed a second human case of West Nile virus, a man in his 50s from Plymouth County.

There are 35 communities now at critical risk, 40 at high risk, and 128 at moderate risk for the EEE virus in Massachusetts. A map of the state's current EEE risk levels can be found [here](#).

"We continue to emphasize the need for people to protect themselves from mosquito bites," said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. "The unusually warm weather expected this weekend will increase outdoor activity among people and mosquitoes. It is absolutely essential that people take steps to avoid being bitten by a mosquito."

In addition to the 10 human cases of EEE this season in Massachusetts, there have also been eight confirmed cases of EEE this year in animals – seven horses and a goat. Two people have died from EEE.

State officials continue to remind residents throughout the Commonwealth to take personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Residents can learn more about EEE and ways to protect themselves on DPH's website.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases

occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 421 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. An additional 76 mosquitos have tested positive for WNV.

As previously announced, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is conducting aerial spraying for mosquitoes tonight and through the weekend in parts of Bristol and Plymouth counties. As always, aerial spraying is weather and equipment dependent and falling evening temperatures will affect the ability to conduct an effective spraying operation.

Residents are encouraged to visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/eee for the latest updates on spraying in their communities.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours

The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites

Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently. **Install or Repair Screens.** Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets about EEE in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage www.mass.gov/eee.

For questions about aerial spraying, contact the MDAR Crop and Pest Services at (617) 626-1700.

State officials announce 9th human case of EEE in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing has confirmed the 9th human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a man in his 70s from Essex County. As a result, risk levels have been raised to high in Ipswich and Topsfield, and to moderate in Beverly, Danvers, Hamilton, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Middleton, Newbury, Newburyport, and Wenham.

There are 35 communities now at critical risk, 40 at high risk, and 128 at moderate risk for the EEE virus in Massachusetts. A map of the state's current EEE risk levels can be found [here](#).

"We continue to emphasize the need for people to protect themselves from mosquito bites," said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. "We urge the public to use bug spray, wear long sleeves and pants and socks to reduce exposed skin, and stay indoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active."

In addition to the nine human cases of EEE this season in Massachusetts, there have also been eight confirmed cases of EEE this year in animals – seven horses and a goat. One person has died. There has also been one human case of West Nile virus (WNV) this season.

State officials continue to remind residents throughout the Commonwealth to take personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Residents can learn more about EEE and ways to protect themselves on DPH's website.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that

can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 417 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. An additional 76 mosquitos have tested positive for WNV.

As previously announced, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is conducting aerial spraying for mosquitoes tonight and through the weekend in parts of Middlesex, Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth counties. As always, aerial spraying is weather and equipment dependent and falling evening temperatures will affect the ability to conduct an effective spraying operation. Aerial mosquito spraying in specific communities in Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties was concluded last evening.

Residents are encouraged to visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/eee for the latest updates on spraying in their communities.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours

The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites

Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets about EEE in multiple languages visit the DPH

webpage www.mass.gov/eee.

For questions about aerial spraying, contact the MDAR Crop and Pest Services at (617) 626-1700.

Southcoast Health donates holstered tourniquets to the New Bedford Police Department in honor of K-9 Sgt. Sean McNamee Gannon

Southcoast Health donated 255 holstered tourniquets, one for every New Bedford police officer, to offer lifesaving intervention for active bleeds in the field. The donation was made in honor of K-9 Sgt. Sean Gannon, a New Bedford native who was killed in the line of duty in 2018.

“My wife Denise and I and our entire family continue to be profoundly moved by Southcoast Health’s ongoing alliance to keep Sean’s legacy alive in so many positive ways,” said Patrick Gannon. “Southcoast Health’s generous donation of holstered tourniquets will save precious moments where life and death hang in the balance. Denise and I cannot imagine a more fitting tribute to our son,” said Patrick Gannon, Sean’s father and 40-year employee of Southcoast Health. In 2018, Southcoast paid tribute to K-9 Sgt. Gannon by renaming the pediatric unit at St. Luke’s Hospital the K-9 Sgt. Sean McNamee Gannon Pediatric Unit, which includes a 17-ft. long photography installation chronicling Sgt. Gannon’s life. Southcoast also invested \$25,000 in proceeds from a T-shirt

fundraiser to build the K-9 Sgt. Sean Gannon Memorial playground, which will be located at the Campbell Elementary School in New Bedford.

The application of a tourniquet can mean the difference between life and death. Tourniquets are used to control bleeding from extremity wounds and have been incorporated into trauma care both in the prehospital and hospital settings. This simple piece of equipment has become essential to saving lives in trauma situations, such as gun violence, that have become prevalent in our current culture.



The tourniquet donation is the latest example of how Southcoast Health is engaging in community collaborations to identify and create life-saving solutions to issues that affect patients who depend on Southcoast Health for excellence in care. The donation to the New Bedford Police Department was supported by Dr. Michael Grossman, chief of Trauma and acute care surgery at Southcoast Health, and Stephanie Raby, RN, trauma program manager at St. Luke's Hospital.

"Equipping the New Bedford Police Department with these holstered tourniquets will be a great asset for first

responders in the field and for the caregivers in our emergency departments,” said Grossman. “When a tourniquet is appropriately applied in the field, it reduces blood loss and gives ED staff an advantage in achieving positive outcomes when treating patients.”

“This meaningful donation has the potential to save many lives. K-9 Sgt. Gannon’s sacrifice has become such a deeply rooted part of the South Coast. The donation of tourniquets expresses yet another way that Sean’s life and his service will touch members of the community,” said Raby. “And it’s another example of how Southcoast Health’s commitment to providing world-class healthcare does not stop at the door of our hospitals.”

“I’m pleased that New Bedford’s police officers will have these lifesaving tools at the ready,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “This donation by Southcoast Health reflects the importance of partnerships in keeping our city and law enforcement prepared for any situation. The City is grateful to Southcoast for this gesture and the spirit of collaboration it symbolizes.”



The tourniquets were delivered to the New Bedford police department on Monday, September 9 and were received with

gratitude by the department.

“K-9 Sgt. Gannon’s loss impacted the police community and the City of New Bedford in a profound way. This simple lifesaving tool of tourniquets addresses the risks that all police officers in the field of law enforcement as they protect and serve our community. They remind us that people care deeply,” said Chief Joseph Cordeiro of the New Bedford police department. “I am grateful to Southcoast Health and the Gannon family for this meaningful gesture.”

“Every second matters in the field. Decisions must be made in split seconds, and oftentimes, injuries cannot wait for treatment” said Officer Hank Turgeon, New Bedford Police Union President. “Now our men and women in blue will have another lifesaving tool at their fingertips for themselves and injured civilians. I look forward to continuing to work with Southcoast Health and to commence training with the new trauma center staff.”

State officials announce 8th human case of EEE in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing has confirmed the 8th human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a man in his 50s from northeastern Bristol County.

DPH and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) continue to emphasize that residents throughout the Commonwealth take personal precautions to prevent mosquito

bites as they announced the next round of aerial mosquito spraying in areas of the state at critical and high risk for EEE.

Weather and equipment permitting, MDAR anticipates the next round of aerial spraying to begin as early as Monday evening, September 16, in parts of Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties. While aerial spraying is weather and equipment dependent, above-average evening temperatures next week are likely to permit the application.

Communities that are scheduled to be partially or fully sprayed beginning Monday evening and over the next week include:

- Hampden County: Brimfield, Palmer
- Hampshire County: Ware
- Worcester County: Brookfield, Charlton, East Brookfield, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Southbridge, Sturbridge, Warren, West Brookfield

MDAR is currently conducting aerial spraying in parts of Middlesex, Worcester, and Norfolk counties which is anticipated to continue through the weekend. As weather, temperature, and equipment conditions permit, plans for subsequent rounds of spraying will include critical and high-risk communities in the counties of Bristol, Essex, Franklin, and Plymouth. Residents are encouraged to visit the DPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/eee> for the latest updates on spraying in their communities.

In addition to the eight human cases of EEE this season in Massachusetts, there have also been eight confirmed cases of EEE this year in animals – seven horses and a goat. There has been one human case of West Nile virus (WNV) this season.

There are 35 communities now at critical risk, 38 at high risk, and 120 at moderate risk for the EEE virus in Massachusetts. On August 29 it was reported that a horse from

Granby was infected with the EEE virus. The Department received additional information and has now confirmed that this horse was stabled in Connecticut. As a result, the towns of Granby, Belchertown, Ludlow, Chicopee, and South Hadley have all been reduced to moderate risk. A map of the state's current EEE risk levels can be found **here**.

"Even though it is September, it is still mosquito season," said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. "We continue to emphasize the need for people to protect themselves from mosquito bites."

"MDAR continues to conduct aerial spraying and also supports the use of truck-based ground spraying as conditions allow this season," said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux. "We continue to urge the public to use the insect repellants suggested by MA DPH, wear long sleeves and pants, and stay indoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active."

Additionally, MDAR reminds horse owners to promptly vaccinate their horses to ensure proper protection from EEE. If your horse was already vaccinated this year, MDAR advises checking with your veterinarian about a booster. Previously vaccinated horses may quickly respond to a booster vaccine and readily develop protective antibody. Horses of unknown vaccination status should receive two vaccines in the first year. Foals should be vaccinated as soon as they are old enough (3-4 months of age) and need a second booster vaccine for adequate protection.

Local communities are continuing truck-mounted ground spraying for mosquitoes. Spraying for mosquitoes does not eliminate the risk of EEE transmission and the public is asked to continue to follow personal protection practices.

Residents can learn more about EEE and ways to protect themselves on DPH's website **here**.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that

can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 414 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. An additional 72 mosquitos have tested positive for WNV.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours

The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites

Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing

water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets about EEE in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage www.mass.gov/eee.

For questions about aerial spraying, contact the MDAR Crop and Pest Services at (617) 626-1700.

New Bedford parks will continue to close at dusk until first frost of the season

The City of New Bedford's parks and other open public spaces will close at dusk until the first frost of the season based on the recommendation of the City's Health Department.

Parks have closed at dusk daily since August 16 in response to the risk of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE); health officials have recommended that the closures continue until the first frost of the season, which in Greater New Bedford generally occurs in mid-October, according to the National Weather Service. Multiple positive tests of mosquitoes with EEE in New Bedford and surrounding municipalities have led the state's Department of Public Health to classify the risk level in Greater New Bedford as 'critical' for EEE.

Through October 18, park lights will be turned off at dusk (approximately 7:00 p.m., but gradually beginning earlier through October). Athletic leagues and other organizations utilizing the park should not continue their activities beyond dusk, due to the increased risk of EEE. Should first frost occur before October 18, the City will announce any changes to the dusk park closures.

The same precautionary measures are advised for EEE, West Nile Virus, and the Zika virus. These include the following:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours – While mosquitoes are out at all hours of the day, their peak biting times are from dusk to dawn. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur

during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing, especially if you work or spend a lot of time outdoors.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water – Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens – Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

State Health Officials Announce First Human Case of West Nile Virus in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Wednesday announced the first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in the state this year. The individual is a man in his 60s from Middlesex County who was hospitalized due to his illness. The risk of human infection with WNV is considered to be generally low throughout the Commonwealth.

“We have not seen much West Nile virus activity this year,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “Still, today’s news is a compelling reminder that we all need to continue to take steps to protect ourselves and our families from mosquito bites.”

In 2018, there were 49 human cases of WNV infection identified in Massachusetts. WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. 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.

“While Massachusetts is seeing a very active season for another mosquito-borne disease, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), this is the first human case of WNV,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine Brown. “We continue to strongly recommend personal precautions to reduce your risk of all mosquito-borne disease.”

Additionally, on August 29 it was reported that a horse from

Granby was infected with the EEE virus. The Department has now confirmed that this horse was stabled in Connecticut. As a result, the towns of Granby, Belchertown, Ludlow, Chicopee, South Hadley have all been reduced to moderate risk.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)], or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitos. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wear long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to help keep mosquitos away from your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitos lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitos to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitos outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitos near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitos. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is diagnosed with WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

Public Health Commissioner mandates immediate reporting of vaping-related disease to the Department of Public Health

Any suspected cases of unexplained e-cigarette or vaping-associated pulmonary disease must be immediately reported to

the Department of Public Health (DPH) for the next 12 months, as a result of a new mandate issued today by Massachusetts Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH.

As more cases of vaping-related pulmonary diseases are seen nationwide, Commissioner Bharel is using her authority under state regulations to require reporting of this emergent condition. Last month, DPH sent a clinical alert to 25,000 Massachusetts health care providers asking them to voluntarily report pulmonary-related disease associated with vaping.

"We are beginning to hear from clinicians about what they are seeing in their practice as a result of the health alert," Commissioner Bharel said. "Today's action establishes the legal framework for healthcare providers to report cases and suspected cases so that we can get a better sense of the overall burden of disease in Massachusetts. It also will allow us to provide case counts to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as they continue to try to understand the nationwide impact of vaping-related disease."

The DPH regulation authorizes the Commissioner to declare diseases or conditions immediately reportable to the Department, as well as to conduct related surveillance. DPH said it was issuing the new mandate "because this disease is recently identified or suspected to be a public health concern and because it is necessary to collect more information to assess and reduce the potential burden of associated morbidity."

While not rare, today's action is also not routine. The Commissioner last issued a mandate two years ago requiring providers to report cases of amnesia associated with intravenous drug use.

The new requirements were sent to all clinicians, including internal medicine, family practice, general practice, emergency medicine, and clinical care as well as

pediatricians, pulmonologists, and nurse practitioners. It was accompanied by a clinical advisory that asks providers to report any case of a person experiencing otherwise unexplained progressive symptoms of shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, cough, or weight loss, of any severity, and an abnormal chest imaging study associated with vaping. The suspected cases are to be reported via a form and sent to a confidential fax line.

Nationally, as of September 6, 2019, 450 possible cases of severe lung disease associated with electronic-cigarette product use or vaping were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Patients have presented with respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Symptoms worsened over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Other symptoms reported by some patients included fever, anorexia, pleuritic chest pain, nausea, and diarrhea.

All of those patients reported vaping in the weeks and months prior to hospital admission. Many have acknowledged recent use of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products; however, no specific product has been identified in all cases, nor has any product been conclusively linked to this clinical syndrome. Some cases have reported using only nicotine-containing products.

DPH is actively investigating several suspected vaping-associated pulmonary cases. There have been no cases confirmed in Massachusetts.

The latest statewide data shows 41 percent of Massachusetts high school students have tried e-cigarettes at least once. About 20 percent of them reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days – a rate six times higher than adults. Nearly 10 percent of middle school students say they have tried e-cigarettes.

In 2018, Governor Charlie Baker signed a law that incorporates e-cigarettes into the definition of tobacco, therefore making it illegal to vape where it is illegal to smoke and that raised the minimum legal sale of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes to 21.

In the past year, DPH has conducted two public information campaigns (see [here](#) and [here](#)) to raise awareness among middle and high-school-aged youth and their parents about the dangers of vapes and e-cigarettes. DPH will reprise both campaigns in the next few weeks and include resources for young people to assist them with quitting.

Massachusetts Public Health Officials Confirm Two New Human Cases of EEE

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing has confirmed two new cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a woman in her 60s from eastern Worcester County and a female under the age of 18 from southwestern Middlesex County. This brings the total number of human cases of EEE to seven this year in Massachusetts. As a result, the risk level in Framingham, Marlborough, Northborough, and Sudbury has been raised to critical and the risk level in Berlin, Boylston, Hudson, Maynard, Stow, and Wayland has been raised to high.

In total, there are 36 communities now at critical risk, 42 at high risk, and 115 at moderate risk for the EEE virus in Massachusetts. A map of the state's current EEE risk levels can be found [here](#).

There have also been nine confirmed cases of EEE this year in animals; eight horses and one goat.

“Even though temperatures have cooled off, it is not unusual to see human EEE cases confirmed in September,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “This is why we continue to urge the public to take seriously the threat that mosquitos can pose and to take steps to avoid being bitten.”

All residents throughout the Commonwealth should continue to use mosquito repellent and those in high and critical risk communities should consider staying indoors during the dusk to dawn hours to reduce exposure to mosquitoes. Residents can learn more about EEE and about ways to protect themselves on DPH’s website.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 400 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people.

Local communities are continuing truck-mounted spraying for mosquitoes. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources completed aerial mosquito spraying in parts of Bristol, Plymouth, Middlesex, and Worcester counties last month to help reduce the public health risk. Aerial spraying has concluded for the season primarily due to evening temperatures being too low to permit effective aerial application. Spraying for mosquitoes does not eliminate the risk of EEE transmission and the public is asked to continue to follow personal protection practices.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves

and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs should be flushed

out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage <https://www.mass.gov/guides/eee-in-massachusetts>.