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For Immediate Release	Contact:
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West Nile Virus Death in Yakima County Confirmed by DOH and CDC Laboratory testing confirms initial diagnosis

Yakima County, WA— The Yakima Health District (YHD) has received confirmation from the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that the mid-September death of a 71 year old woman from Sunnyside was caused by West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first death from WNV in Washington State. Yakima County has had 20 confirmed cases of WNV this year and YHD is awaiting confirmation from the CDC on three more potential cases. Besides the one death, all other Yakima County cases are recovering.

"YHD has anticipated potential complications from West Nile virus because of the increased number of cases this year. That does not lessen the weight and devastating loss endured by the family and community. We at the Yakima Health District offer our deepest condolences and support to the family and affected communities in Sunnyside" says Dr. Devika Singh, Deputy Health Officer for the Yakima Health District.

West Nile virus is transmitted to humans through mosquito bites. During peak mosquito season several precautionary measures are encouraged including eliminating standing water, using appropriate mosquito repellent, avoiding being outdoors around dusk and dawn (peak mosquito hours) and wearing long sleeves and pants when in areas with mosquito activity. Because the temperature is colder and freezing temperatures are beginning to be seen throughout Yakima County, mosquito activity and the risk for WNV infection should be decreasing for this year.

Only one in five infected people develop symptoms of WNV. Onset of illness occurs 3-14 days after being infected by the bite of a mosquito carrying the virus. Illness typically resolves without medical help. Symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, rash, and swollen lymph nodes. A more serious form of WNV disease affects less than one percent of symptomatic cases, producing symptoms such as neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, or even death. Individuals over 50 years of age appear to be more susceptible to developing this more serious form of WNV. People experiencing any of the above symptoms should consult their medical provider.

For more information on mosquito-borne illness like WNV, visit the YHD Website at www.yakimapublichealth.org. You can also get news about WNV in Yakima County and the state by following the YHD on twitter at: www.twitter.com/yhd_wnv.