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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 28, 2025**

**Case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis Confirmed in Benzie County Horse**

Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD) with the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) is reporting a confirmed case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a horse in Benzie County. The horse was unvaccinated and became infected after being bitten by an infected mosquito. This case serves as a reminder that EEE is a serious, mosquito-borne illness that affects both animals and humans.

“EEE is rare, but it is one of the most dangerous mosquito-borne diseases we see in Michigan,” said Dan Thorell, Health Officer at BLDHD. “While horses are at especially high risk if unvaccinated, humans can also become infected, and prevention is critical.”

**About Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE):**

- Transmission: EEE is spread to horses and humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Infected horses and birds can also serve as a source of infection for mosquitoes that then transmit the virus to people.
- Symptoms in birds and horses: Fever, incoordination, weakness, seizures, and often death (up to 90% of cases are fatal).
- Symptoms in Humans: Fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, confusion, seizures, coma, and in some cases, death. Survivors may experience long-term neurological problems.
- Risk: People living in or visiting wooded, swampy, or rural areas especially during dawn and dusk are at increased risk during mosquito season.

**Prevention Tips:**

The best way to reduce the risk of EEE is to prevent mosquito bites:

- Use EPA-registered insect repellents that contain DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Wear long sleeves and pants outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk.
- Eliminate standing water around homes where mosquitoes breed.
- Vaccinate horses annually against EEE.

**What Residents Should Do:**

- Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites.
- Horse owners should talk with their veterinarian about vaccination to prevent infection.

If you experience symptoms after being bitten by mosquitoes, seek medical care promptly.

For more information about EEE and mosquito-borne illness prevention, visit:

- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services EEE Information](#)
- [Michigan Emerging Disease EEE Information](#)
- [Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department- Environmental Health Alerts](#)

If you suspect an animal has EEE, contact your veterinarian and report the case to Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at 800-292-3939. If you see sick or dead wild birds or mammals, you can report your observation to the [DNR Eyes in the Field program](#). For general EEE questions, contact MDHHS at: (888) 535-6136. You can also email MDHHS at [eee@michigan.gov](mailto:eee@michigan.gov).

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