



MEMBER RELEASE

Changes to the West Nile Virus Risk Reduction Initiative

To: Mayors, Chairs and Administrators
From: Local Government Program Services, UBCM
Date: February 9, 2010

The West Nile Virus Risk Reduction Initiative was developed in 2005 with funding from the Ministry of Health to ensure a proactive approach to mosquito control. The program has been offered to all local governments and First Nations in BC, with some opportunities for activities on Crown land, since 2005.

The Ministry of Healthy Living & Sport (MHLS) has indicated that there is increasing information regarding the factors that are associated with large outbreaks of West Nile Virus (WNV) – such as the presence of the appropriate species of mosquitoes carrying WNV and confirmed cases in birds and animals. In 2009 in BC, there were two locally acquired human cases and two cases in horses in the Southern Okanagan, and one case in a horse in the Fraser Valley. There have also been cases in adjacent jurisdictions over the past several years.

However, it is now apparent that, largely due to climate factors, large areas of BC are unlikely to be affected by WNV and, through consultation with MHLS, provincial public health officials have agreed to a re-evaluation of the actual risk of WNV in BC.

Based on this, the 2010 WNV program will be available only to local governments and/or First Nations in the highest risk areas of the province and where conditions warrant intervention at this time based on best available information. This includes the following regional districts (including their members and area First Nations) only:

- Regional District of Central Okanagan
- Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
- Fraser Valley Regional District
- Metro Vancouver

These areas have been designated by the Ministry to ensure that sufficient funds are available to meet the requests of the areas of highest priority from a public health perspective.

MHLS has also asked that the 2010 program require that local risk assessments be undertaken prior to the application being submitted. These assessments will identify areas of highest risk within the eligible regional district, as well as mitigation techniques, and help applicants to prioritize work in their area. The local Medical Health Officer (MHO) will be required to participate in the assessment and agree to the local plan by way of signing the funding application before submission to UBCM.

As in past years, regional applications will be encouraged, but any eligible applicant will have the opportunity to submit on their own, or with another eligible applicant, provided they work with their local MHO. Funding allocations will not be identified, but applicants will be required to outline their funding request.

The 2010 Program & Application Guide and Application Form will be available on the UBCM website shortly. The application deadline will be March 30, 2010.

For more information about the funding program, please contact:

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For more information about the re-evaluation of the actual risk of WNV in BC or the required local risk assessments, please contact:

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