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Mono County Reports Fatality Due to Hantavirus

MONO COUNTY, Calif. (February 27, 2025) – Mono County Health and Human Services, Public Health Division is saddened to announce the death of a Mono County resident due to hantavirus. Mono County extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of the deceased.

Hantavirus is endemic to Mono County and the surrounding region, commonly found in local deer mice. Human infection occurs through exposure to contaminated rodent droppings, urine, or saliva, typically when these materials become airborne and are inhaled. Person-to-person transmission does not occur.

“We are deeply saddened by this loss within our community,” stated Dr. Boo, Mono County Public Health Officer. *“Hantavirus is a serious concern in our area, and we urge residents and visitors to take precautions to minimize their risk of exposure.”*

The exact source of the individual’s infection is currently under investigation. Mono County Public Health, in collaboration with experts from the California Department of Public Health, will conduct a thorough investigation to identify potential risk factors and prevent further infections. California typically sees two to three cases of hantavirus annually, with the Sierra region generally having the most cases. While potentially fatal, most individuals survive with intensive supportive medical care.

Exposure to hantavirus most often occurs indoors, particularly in enclosed spaces where rodents have been active. The risk is heightened in rooms and buildings that have been closed for extended periods, lacking ventilation. Mono County Public Health recommends the following precautions to prevent hantavirus infection:

- **Ventilate:** Open doors and windows for at least 30 minutes before cleaning any area where rodent activity is suspected.

- Disinfect: Spray contaminated areas with a bleach solution (1.5 cups of bleach per gallon of water) or a commercial disinfectant labeled as effective against viruses. Allow the solution to sit for a few minutes before cleaning.
- Avoid Dust: Do not sweep or vacuum dry rodent droppings, urine, or nesting materials, as this can create airborne particles. Wet cleaning methods are recommended.
- Protective Gear: If dealing with a heavy infestation, wear a well-fitting N-95 respirator mask during cleaning.
- Rodent-Proofing: Take steps to prevent rodents from entering and residing in homes, outbuildings, and other structures. Seal cracks and holes, and store food in rodent-proof containers.

Residents with flu-like symptoms severe enough to seek medical care should inform the treating provider if they have had significant exposure to rodents and their waste in the preceding 2-6 weeks.

The California Department of Public Health has more hantavirus information at: cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/HantavirusPulmonarySyndrome.aspx

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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