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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Eastern Equine Encephalitis In Hillsdale County**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has notified the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency that a fawn from Hillsdale County has tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). This is the first EEE positive deer detected in Michigan in 2017. EEE is an infectious, often fatal disease of horses, humans, and pigs. Wild ruminants (white-tailed deer) can also become infected. EEE is transmitted by mosquito vectors. When levels of the circulating virus are high, mammals, specifically horses, humans, and deer, can become infected when bitten by a mosquito that has fed on an infected bird. In addition to this positive deer, there are 6 horses that have tested positive for EEE so far in Michigan in 2017. The counties in Michigan with EEE positive horses include Clare, Manistee, Marquette, Roscommon, and Wexford.

A deer or horse infected with EEE may exhibit behavior that includes; loss of awareness of their surroundings, walk in circles, exhibit muscle paralysis, stupor, lethargy, and incoordination. There is a vaccine that has been proven effective in horses but there is no vaccine for EEE that can be used on wild deer. Horses infected with EEE often do not survive. Should you suspect EEE contact your veterinarian. Should you suspect a deer is acting abnormal it should not be handled or consumed.

“Horse owners are reminded to vaccinate their horses to prevent EEE and West Nile Virus which are both mosquito-borne diseases,” states Rebecca Burns, Health Officer for the Community Health Agency.

EEE is a zoonotic disease that can infect humans, horses, and deer. Because EEE can be transmitted to humans by mosquitoes, people should take the necessary precautions to avoid exposure to these insects. Although EEE occurs rarely in humans, there is a case fatality rate of 30 to 70% and EEE often causes severe permanent neurological disorders among survivors. Michigan residents can learn more about 2017 EEE activity by visiting the MDHHS Emerging Disease website at [www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases).

Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites that spread the virus:

- Apply insect repellents containing DEET or EPA-approved products; oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer lasting protection.
- Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors or when mosquitoes are active.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors.
- Know that peak biting hours are from dusk to dawn.
- Vaccinate horses against EEE and West Nile Virus, which is also transmitted by mosquitos

For more information about how to protect yourself from EEE and other mosquito transmitted diseases, visit [www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases). To learn more about services provided by the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency “Your Local Health Department”, visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) and like our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/BHSJWIC/](http://www.facebook.com/BHSJWIC/).