



## SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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### **Southwest District Health Director declares mosquito Health Emergency**

Albany, GA – Southwest District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant declared a Health Emergency in 13 counties hard-hit by flooding, then swamped by mosquitoes breeding in the overabundant water. The declaration includes Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Thomas and Worth counties.

“This declaration was made to provide support to these counties who are engaged in mosquito control activities because of the dramatic increase in mosquito activity following the heavy rains and flooding of last month,” Grant said.

The standing water that persists after flooding provides additional places for mosquitoes to breed and may cause mosquito eggs to hatch that have lain dormant for months or even years, she said.

“Dougherty County, for example, received approximately 22-25 inches of rain, and has experienced a more than 200 percent increase in calls from the public,” Grant said. “As a result, it is spraying seven days a week to kill adult mosquitoes.”

Several mosquito-borne viruses circulate in Georgia each year and are capable of causing disease in humans and other animals. The most common mosquito-borne viruses in South Georgia include West Nile virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine encephalitis virus (EEE). Although disease in humans has not been detected in the impacted area, the increased mosquito populations and increased exposure to residents increases the potential for disease transmission. In addition, mosquitoes that are common vectors of these diseases have been identified from the traps.

“This declaration is intended to support these counties in accessing priority status and resources that will allow enhanced mosquito control during the post flood period,” said Grant.

Residents should also use personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites during this time. Some simple tips to remember are:

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth

- Using an insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient when outdoors.
- Stay indoors during dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active. If you have to be outdoors during these times be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants.
- Make sure screens on your windows and doors fit properly and are not ripped to keep mosquitoes out.
- When weather permits, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent will give extra precaution.

“It is very important for people to remember to empty any standing water in buckets, bird baths, water bowls or anything else around them that can collect water regularly to help control mosquitoes around your home,” Grant said.

For more information on the prevention of mosquito-borne illnesses, visit [www.southwesthealthdistrict.org](http://www.southwesthealthdistrict.org) or call your local county health department.