

## PHSA Laboratories

BCCDC Public Health Laboratory

Aug 24, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

### **Re: Organ Donor Testing for West Nile Virus (WNV) - Routine testing of organ donor samples should cease effective October 1, 2022**

As you are aware, WNV infection is a seasonal infection in Canada typically causing human infections during the summer months, usually starting from August to late September. There was very little activity of WNV since 2010 till to date in BC. There was no locally acquired human or animal WNV cases since 2019; however, in 2021, two travel-related human cases were reported, no animals tested positive for WNV in BC in 2021. As of August 24, 2022, no cases of locally acquired WNV infections were identified. Please note that there has been no active mosquito surveillance performed since 2015 in BC. Sporadic human and animal WNV cases continue to be reported every year in neighboring US states such as Washington State.

WNV can be transmitted by blood products or organ donations from a WNV infected donor typically during the incubation period which is approximately 3 to 14 days after infection. As a result Canadian Blood Services tests all blood products for WNV RNA.

The decision as to when during the season to perform WNV testing routinely in solid and non-solid organ donors is based on a risk assessment of the probability of local transmission. For example, WNV testing of solid and non-solid organ donors is not recommended in BC during the fall and winter months (October to June) when mosquitoes, the vectors, are not active.

Please note that if the donor has a WNV risk factor, (e.g., travel to or residence in areas where WNV transmission occurs year round such as Florida, California or other Southern USA States, or lives in or visited other endemic regions around the world) WNV PCR will be performed on request. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns.

Sincerely,



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