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NEWS RELEASE

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County health officials offer hantavirus reminder after three rodents test positive

Three out of 34 rodents collected in January from San Timoteo Canyon in the Norton Younglove Preserve near Beaumont have tested positive for hantavirus. The California Department of Public Health confirmed the mice that Riverside County Environmental Health officials submitted have tested positive for the virus. Over the past decade, approximately 10 percent of the rodents collected in Riverside County have tested positive for hantavirus. This is fairly consistent with the average for California.

To date, there are no documented human cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome originating within Riverside County.

Hantavirus may be transmitted by inhaling tiny droplets contaminated with the virus from deer mouse droppings and urine. Infected rodents do not appear to show any signs of illness and it is important to keep from stirring-up materials while cleaning any mouse-infested areas in and around homes, especially in rural areas. Residents can take the following steps to reduce their exposure to hantavirus:

- Ventilate affected areas for several hours before cleanup by opening doors and windows.
- Use rubber gloves.
- Apply a 10% solution of bleach or household disinfectant to contaminated surfaces and allow at least 15 minutes' contact time before removal.
- Clean the affected area with a sponge or mop. **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM.**
- Double-bag any dead rodents and clean-up materials (newspaper, paper towels, etc.) securely in plastic bags and seal.
- Before removing gloves, wash gloved hands in disinfectant or with soap and water. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water after removing gloves. Dispose of gloves and cleanup materials with other household waste.

Individuals concerned about illness should contact their health provider. For more information on hantavirus and the Vector Control Program, contact the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health office in Hemet at (951) 766-9454 or use the Department website at www.rivcoeh.org