



**COUNTY OF ORANGE
HEALTH CARE AGENCY**

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**PUBLIC HEALTH
EPIDEMIOLOGY & ASSESSMENT**

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TO: Orange County Infectious Diseases Specialists, Intensivists, Neurologists, and other interested Physicians

RE: Clinical trials for treatment of West Nile Virus Neuroinvasive Disease

West Nile Virus (WNV) activity is high in Orange County this year and several hospitals have reported patients with West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease (WNND). In the past several years, cases have continued to be reported with onset through September and October in Orange County, so we expect to have many more cases this year. **For more information on WNV, see www.ochealthinfo.com/epi.**

Currently, there is no FDA-approved treatment for WNV infection, and mortality from West Nile encephalitis has been previously reported to be about 9% in the United States (U.S.). This year, Orange County has already had two deaths associated with WNV infection and 79 WNV-related fatalities have been reported in California since 2004. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has indicated that the below ongoing study is the only randomized, placebo-controlled trial for the treatment of WNND currently underway in the U.S.:

A Randomized Double-Blinded, Placebo Controlled Trial of Alpha-Interferon (Alferon) Therapy for West Nile Meningoencephalitis (Protocol WN-102).

Website: <http://www.nyhq.org/posting/rahal.html>

Contact: James J. Rahal, MD, Director, Infectious Disease Section, New York Hospital Queens
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Prior laboratory confirmation is NOT necessary for initial enrollment of patients in the clinical trial. However, IRB approval is necessary to enroll patients in this trial so you should explore the IRB approval process, including the possibility of emergency IRB approval if available, at your hospital now if you are considering having your hospital participate as an enrollment site.

The Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) does not endorse any specific product or clinical trial but is providing you this information to assist you in the management of your patients and to improve enrollment in clinical trials that might lead to effective treatment options for patients with WNND.

West Nile Fever, WNND, and encephalitis and meningitis due to any cause, are reportable conditions under California law. Cases should be reported within one working day to OC Epidemiology (714-834-8180).