



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

# **Senator Ritchie Announces Free Mosquito Treatments for Homeowners**

Patty Ritchie

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### **Recruiting 2,736 CNY and NNY Citizens in the Fight Against Deadly EEE Virus**

State Senators Patty Ritchie, David Valesky, John DeFrancisco and Joseph Griffo, and Assemblyman Will Barclay today joined with county and local health officials to announce the availability to homeowners of free mosquito treatments to help stop the spread of the deadly EEE virus.

The free treatments—packets of a locally produced larvicide that can be used to treat standing water, including small pools, bird baths and ornamental ponds—are being made available to homeowners through a partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Jefferson, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties. The treatments are funded with a state grant obtained by Senator Ritchie.

The funding will provide anti-mosquito treatment for 2,736 homeowners across the six counties, and represents the third leg in a plan to beef up the state and local response to EEE—which also includes better coordination among officials in affected counties, and increased state funding for education and prevention—in the wake of last summer's death of 4-year-old Maggie Sue Wilcox, the fifth New Yorker to die from EEE.

Use of larvicides was identified in Senator Ritchie's special EEE Roundtable of health experts last fall as one more way to help stop the spread of EEE by reducing the number of mosquitoes that could become carriers of the disease.

"Working together, we're making EEE prevention a priority of state and county governments, and taking steps to teach individuals and families to protect themselves, so we can save lives," said Senator Ritchie. "This program is another step in helping to educate the public about the danger, while also helping to reduce the risk of this deadly disease."

"Preventing EEE requires the efforts of everyone, including government, health experts, farmers, homeowners and families, and I applaud Senator Ritchie for taking the lead on this very important fight to save lives," said Senator Valesky.

"Everyone needs to take steps to prevent the spread of EEE, and our family believes that starts with education, and action to eliminate mosquitoes that spread the disease," said Donna Wilcox, Maggie Sue's aunt, who has worked tirelessly to raise public awareness of the disease. "Now, everyday people are making a difference in helping to stop EEE, and possibly save lives."

"Central New Yorkers are learning we need to step up and take action to protect ourselves, even as government also does its part," said Senator DeFrancisco. "That's why I've supported Senator Ritchie and her efforts to raise awareness and increase the public's protection."

"EEE has sadly already claimed human lives, and the only protection is awareness," said Senator Griffo. "That's the goal of this effort, and I know it is helping to make a difference."

"Oswego County has been at the forefront of EEE education and prevention, and this new program is another way to highlight how the state and county are working together to fight EEE," said Assemblyman Will Barclay.

"Farmers and homeowners can use this product to treat their own property, and help stop mosquitoes that may carry the EEE virus," said John DeHollander, District manager of the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District, who has been coordinating distribution of the larvicide products. "I wish to thank Senator Ritchie for her leadership, and the attention she has paid to a very serious problem in Oswego County."

“This effort is an important part of our work to educate and inform the public about the dangers of EEE, and steps that people can take to protect themselves,” said Inga Back, Oswego County’s Acting Director of Public Health. “The Oswego County Health Department is proud to team with Senator Ritchie and Oswego County SWCD on this public health awareness effort.”

EEE is a mosquito-borne virus that affects horses and other livestock, and rarely occurs in humans. Five human deaths in New York since 1971 all have occurred in Oswego and Onondaga Counties, while dozens of horses have succumbed in the six counties included in the larvicide program.

Tips on protecting yourself from EEE are available by [CLICKING HERE](#).

The larvicide treatments act to kill mosquitoes before they develop to their biting stage. Homeowners are strongly advised to [read the label directions](#) before use.

Homeowners are eligible to receive one free packet of larvicide treatment, which is manufactured by a Central New York company and is available on a first-come, first-served basis through Soil and Water Conservation District offices in the affected counties:

### **Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District**

21168 State Route 232  
Watertown, New York 13601  
782-2749

### **Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District**

USDA Service Center  
6503 Wes Road  
Hamilton, New York 13346  
824-9849

### **Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District**

USDA Service center  
121 Second Street, Room E  
Oriskany, New York

736-3334

**Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District**

6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway  
Liverpool, New York 13088  
457-0325

**Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District**

3105 State Route 3  
Fulton, New York 13069  
592-9663

**St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District**

1942 Old DeKalb Road  
Canton, New York 13617  
386-3582

The larvicide program is part of a broader effort by Senator Ritchie to educate the public and help prevent EEE. Other steps have included:

- -- Securing \$150,000 in state budget funds for mosquito eradication and EEE prevention in impacted Central and Northern New York counties;
- — Ινχρεασεδ φυνδινγ φορ μοσθυιτο χοντρολ τηρουγη αεριαλ σπραψινγ;
- A statewide horse vaccination program that's reaching over 1,000 horse owners and veterinarians across the state;
  - An EEE Roundtable that included experts and public health officials from Oswego County and across Central New York to find better ways of attacking the disease;
  - Sponsoring bipartisan legislation to direct efforts of state health officials toward finding a human vaccine for EEE;
  - Expanded public outreach in partnership with Oswego County and nine local school districts to educate families about the dangers of EEE;
  - Encouraging better coordination and cooperation among the state and locally impacted communities to address EEE as a regional, rather than a local problem.