



Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

Disease Prevention/Health Promotion Division
Epidemiology and Health Statistics Unit
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Zika Situational Report – Friday, March 18, 2016

As of March 16, a total of 258 laboratory-confirmed travel-associated Zika virus disease cases have been reported to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 35 U.S. states. Of the 258 travel-associated infections, 18 are in pregnant women and 6 were sexually transmitted. Texas has 23 Zika virus disease cases.

There are 37 countries and territories with active Zika virus transmission.

As of today, staff have identified 79 persons (64 percent are pregnant women) for whom clinical specimens have been submitted to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) for Zika virus testing. Results have been reported for 21 persons; two persons have been tested positive for Zika, one for Dengue, and one for Chikungunya. Testing results are pending for 45 persons (13 additional individual specimens were not able to be tested). There are no reported severe illnesses, hospitalizations, or deaths.

Staff continue working with Austin area physicians to educate them on the process of submitting specimens to the state laboratory for Zika virus testing. Guidance related to Zika disease and pregnancy, laboratory testing, and prevention of sexual transmission of Zika virus have been prepared by the CDC. Staff are sharing this guidance to physician offices when requested.

Staff are also conducting interviews of persons whose physician has submitted serum specimen to the state laboratory to collect demographic and exposure data required by DSHS. Staff are also providing guidance on ways to protect oneself from mosquito bites to individuals who have scheduled trips to areas where Zika virus is circulating. Staff have drafted a Zika Virus Response Plan which is under current review by the executive leadership team.

The Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department's Zika website for healthcare providers and the public has been updated with links to new information and resources: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/zika-virus>

Other news:

- CDC updated its Zika-related travel advice to exclude destinations above 6,500 feet (2,000 meters), as Aedes mosquitoes, which transmit the virus, are rare in those locations. Travelers whose itineraries are limited to areas above 6,500 feet are at minimal risk of getting Zika from a mosquito. Mexico City and Bogota, Colombia, for

example, are both above 6,500 feet and would involve minimal risk of contracting the virus.

- CDC is hosting a one-day *Zika Action Plan Summit* on April 1 to provide information and tools needed to improve Zika preparedness and response.

We continue to encourage people to follow travel precautions and avoid mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is typically mild and resolves within one week. However, Zika infection in pregnant women may be associated with congenital microcephaly and fetal loss. Guillain-Barre syndrome has also been reported in patients after suspected Zika infection.

Preventative measures residents can take to avoid mosquito bites include draining any water around their property, wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and using EPA-registered insect repellents.

At this time, no additional resources are needed to address and respond to the Zika virus.

Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department (ATCHHSD) staff are available 24/7 to support healthcare providers in responding to any patient with a suspect Zika virus infections. ATCHHSD has created a website for healthcare providers and the public that provides information: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/zika-virus>.