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## **Second Case of Zika Reported in Kentuckian Who Traveled to an Affected Country**

*Mosquito Protection Strongly Recommended When Visiting Zika-Affected Areas*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 21, 2016)** — A second Kentucky resident has tested positive for Zika virus disease after traveling in a Caribbean country where the virus is circulating, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) is reporting. Test results were reported to DPH today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which has been tracking cases across the United States.

The male patient, who experienced Zika-related symptoms while traveling in recent months, resides in Western Kentucky and has fully recovered from the illness. Public health officials say the announcement of the second Zika case in a Kentucky resident underscores the importance of taking preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites if traveling in areas where Zika is circulating.

"Zika virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito and is circulating in many areas of the world where Kentuckians travel for vacation, work and mission trips," said Dr. Kraig Humbaugh, senior deputy commissioner for DPH. "Simple measures like using repellent and wearing appropriate clothing can make all the difference in terms of preventing illnesses like Zika and other vector borne diseases."

Zika is not known to be circulating in the mosquito population in Kentucky – or any other part of the United States.

Meanwhile, many states around the country are reporting positive test results for Zika in residents who have traveled to countries experiencing Zika outbreaks. For this reason, Kentuckians traveling to Zika-affected areas of the world should take steps to protect themselves and their families.

"DPH continues to strongly advise anyone – especially pregnant women and children – planning to travel to countries where Zika virus is circulating to take steps to protect themselves," said Humbaugh. "This includes being knowledgeable about where the virus is spreading, consulting with a healthcare provider, and, most importantly, following public health's recommendations to avoid mosquito bites."

The virus is not now known to be circulating in the mosquito population in Kentucky. Zika has been increasing in recognition in Brazil, Mexico and most recently in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and the US Virgin Islands. For these reasons, DPH advises that Kentucky travelers follow the advice of the CDC, which continues to advise travelers to protect themselves and their family members from mosquito bites when traveling to affected countries, such as areas in South and Central America and the Caribbean. More information about Zika can be obtained from the DPH Health Alerts website at:

<http://healthalerts.ky.gov/Pages/Zika.aspx>. For a full list of affected countries and regions visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>. Localized areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing can be difficult to determine and are likely to continue to change over time.



Travelers to these areas are specifically advised to wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and to use approved insect repellents. CDC has additional information online on how travelers can protect themselves and their family members from mosquito bites: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/index.html>.

Kentuckians planning international travel are particularly encouraged to consult the CDC's Travelers' Health Website, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>, for country-specific health information for travelers. A weblink about Zika Travel Information, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>, is found on that site.

Zika is considered by the World Health Organization to be a serious international public health threat. Until more is known, the CDC continues to recommend that pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant take the following precautions:

- Pregnant women should consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Pregnant women who must travel to one of these areas for business or family emergencies should talk to their doctor or other healthcare professional first and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.
- Women trying to become pregnant should consult with their healthcare professional before traveling to these areas and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.
- Based on reports of possible Zika transmission through sexual contact, CDC has suggested that pregnant women avoid sexual contact with men who have recently returned from areas with Zika transmission or consistently and correctly use condoms during sex for the duration of the pregnancy. Men returning from these regions with non-pregnant sex partners should consider abstaining from sexual activity or consistently using condoms during sex. The duration of Zika virus being present in semen after infection is not presently known.

Except in pregnant women, Zika is almost always a very mild illness and for most people testing is not necessary. Most infected individuals do not show symptoms of Zika virus infection.

There is no vaccine to prevent infection and no specific antiviral treatment for Zika. Its most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes. Pregnant women can be infected with Zika virus in any trimester. Recent evidence suggests a link between infection in pregnant women and infants born with microcephaly. Microcephaly is a condition where the head is smaller than normal and may lead to a child experiencing a variety of other health challenges including physical and speech functions, seizure, hyperactivity, coordination problems and other brain/neurological disorders.

International travelers to at-risk countries who develop fever, rash and other acute symptoms within two weeks of return to Kentucky should consult with their medical provider.

Additional facts and information specifically related to Zika virus can be found online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*