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**Pregnant Woman Who Traveled to an Affected Country Listed as Third Case of Zika Virus
Reported in Kentucky**

Pregnant Women Strongly Recommended to Postpone Travel to Zika-Affected Areas

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 25, 2016)— A woman who is pregnant is the third Kentucky resident who has tested positive for Zika virus disease after traveling to an affected area where the virus is circulating, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) is reporting. Test results were reported to DPH by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which has been tracking cases across the United States.

The patient is from the Louisville area. She experienced Zika-related symptoms after traveling to Central America in recent months and has recovered from the illness.

Increasing scientific evidence suggests a link between infection in pregnant women and infants born with birth defects such as 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

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent infection and no specific antiviral treatment for Zika infection. Its most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes, although many infected individuals have no symptoms at all.

The virus is primarily spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. “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 Dr. Kraig Humbaugh, senior deputy commissioner for DPH. “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.

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.

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.

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>.

-30-

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.