

February 4, 2016

To: Dane County Executive Parisi, Mayor Soglin, City of Madison Common Council, Dane County Board of Supervisors, Board of Health for Madison & Dane County; City of Madison Department and Division Directors, Dane County Department Directors

From: Janel Heinrich, MPH, MA, Director, PHMDC

Memo: Zika Virus

As the Zika virus continues to make headlines and spread, below is an update about the continued monitoring of the situation in Dane County by Public Health Madison & Dane County (PHMDC).

PHMDC is working closely with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and local healthcare providers to monitor any suspected cases of Zika in Dane County. To date, no cases of the disease have been confirmed in Dane County.

Zika virus is transmitted to people by mosquitoes and through sexual activity. The small number of cases of Zika that have been reported in the United States have occurred among travelers to countries where there is active and ongoing spread of the disease, which is primarily in Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

There are currently no reports of Zika virus being transmitted by mosquitoes in the United States. However, on 2/2/16 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed the first Zika virus case acquired through sexual transmission in Texas. The patient was infected with the virus after having sexual contact with an ill individual who returned from a country where Zika virus is present.

The most common symptoms of Zika virus are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting several days to a week. Only approximately 20% of infected persons display symptoms; therefore, a person could be infected without knowing. This is especially dangerous for pregnant women, as researchers are studying the link between Zika infection in pregnant woman and poor birth outcomes, including microcephaly (a medical condition in which the size of the head is smaller than normal because the brain has not developed properly). The CDC currently recommends that all women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant postpone travel to areas where the Zika virus is present or consult their doctor before traveling.

PHMDC advises individuals with symptoms to see a healthcare provider if they have visited an area where Zika virus is present or had sexual contact with a person who traveled to an area where Zika virus is present.

At this time, there is no specific medication available to treat Zika virus and there is not a vaccine. The best way to avoid Zika virus is to avoid mosquito bites and to avoid unprotected sexual contact with a person who has Zika virus.

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During mosquito season in Dane County, approximately late May through September, PHMDC routinely monitors adult and larvae mosquitoes. In over ten years of monitoring, we have not found the two species of mosquitoes identified as Zika carriers in our community. We will continue to monitor this upcoming season for these specific species, in addition to other species that transmit diseases such as West Nile Virus.

Our website includes up to date information on the Zika virus' presence in Dane County, as well general Zika information.

<http://www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/zika/>