



Denton County Health Department FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Zika Virus Disease Contracted in Texas

February 3, 2016 –The Texas Department of State Health Services has reported the first case of Zika virus disease contracted in Texas, with the possibility of sexual transmission from an infected person who had recent travel history from areas where Zika is currently being transmitted. Primary transmission of all previous cases in Texas has been related to foreign travel. At this time, there have been no cases of Zika virus contracted or imported into Denton County.

Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. The mosquitoes typically lay eggs in and near standing water in things like buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots, and vases. They are aggressive daytime biters, prefer to bite people, and live indoors and outdoors near people.

Around 20% of those bitten by a Zika virus-carrying mosquito may experience mild symptoms such as fever, rash, headache, fatigue and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The disease also has been linked to the birth defect microcephaly and other poor birth outcomes in some women infected during their pregnancy. Approximately 80% of those bitten by an infected mosquito will not experience any symptoms. Denton County Health Department (DCHD) will conduct disease investigations of any reported cases. "We encourage clinicians to immediately report any suspected case of Zika virus" stated Juan Rodriguez, Chief Epidemiologist.

DCHD is recommending travel precautions to Central and South America. To prevent the spread of disease, people traveling to those areas currently affected should carefully follow steps to avoid mosquito bites while there. "We want Denton County residents to take precautions when traveling abroad to avoid mosquito bites, and for pregnant women to delay their travel to countries with current Zika transmission" says Dr. Richardson, Health Department Director.

Residents should take the proper precautions to reduce their risk of getting Zika virus:

- **Drain** standing water around their homes to reduce mosquito breeding grounds. Consider use of BTI briquettes (or mosquito dunks) in water that cannot be drained, such as small ponds and drinking troughs.
- Be aware of mosquitoes during times that they are active, **Dawn, Daytime, Dusk** and evening hours.
- Apply an insect repellent that contains **DEET** (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) to exposed skin and to clothing when outdoors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends Picaridin (KBR 3023).
- **Dress** in pants and long sleeves when outside and/or wear permethrin-treated clothing.

Please visit the Denton County Health Department website www.dentoncounty.com/zika for additional information.