



Department of Health

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TO: Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, Local Health Departments (LHDs)

FROM: New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Bureau of Communicable Disease Control

**HEALTH ADVISORY: COMMISSIONER'S WEBINAR
ON ZIKA VIRUS AVAILABLE ONLINE. TELEPHONE INFORMATION LINE
FOR PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS ACTIVATED**

Please distribute to the Infection Control Department, Emergency Department, Infectious Disease Department, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Laboratory Service, Pharmacy, and all patient care areas.

SUMMARY

- New York State Department of Health Commissioner Howard Zucker, M.D., J.D. held a webinar for all clinicians and healthcare providers in New York State this afternoon on Zika virus. This advisory highlights some of the key information from the webinar, which is available online at http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/zika_virus/docs/zika_webinar.pdf. The Department also activated an information line for providers and patients, who can call 1-888-364-4723 between 9AM and 6PM weekdays.
- The Department's Wadsworth Center Laboratories will provide Zika virus testing for all individuals who recently traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission and are currently symptomatic. This is in addition to offering testing to pregnant women who are or were symptomatic and traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission at any point during pregnancy.
 - The Wadsworth Center is one of only three state laboratories in the nation with the ability to conduct the advanced testing needed to confirm Zika virus infection. Wadsworth will offer molecular tests which detect the presence of the virus, as well as both screening and confirmatory tests for antibodies against Zika and other related viruses. Complete results can take up to 21 days after initiation of testing at Wadsworth.
 - Hospitals and providers must contact their LHD prior to sending samples to Wadsworth. Upon learning of a request for Zika virus testing, LHDs should contact their regional epidemiologist.
 - A minimum of three ml of serum and three ml of urine should be frozen at -80C and shipped on dry ice to the Wadsworth Center, David Axelrod Institute, 120 New Scotland Avenue, Albany, NY 12208. Wadsworth's Infectious Diseases Requisition form, which is available at http://www.wadsworth.org/divisions/infdis/DOH-4463_061109_fillable.pdf, must be completed before submission.
 - Results of Zika virus testing will be made available to LHDs and the ordering provider. Providers can access public health consultation for assistance with interpretation of results by calling 1-888-364-4723 between 9AM and 6PM weekdays.

- Women who have traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission should wait a minimum of 21 days after returning before trying to become pregnant. Twenty-one days allows for an incubation period of 3-12 days plus approximately 7 days for virus to clear the body.
- To date, Zika virus has been diagnosed in 10 New York State residents, each of whom was a returning traveler. No cases of local transmission have occurred in the state.
- Zika virus is primarily transmitted by certain species of infected *Aedes* mosquitoes. *Aedes aegypti*, the more efficient vector for humans, is not found in the State. However, *Aedes albopictus*, sometimes called the Asian tiger mosquito, is a possible vector.
 - *Aedes albopictus* has been found in Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland and Orange Counties as well as in New York City.
 - NYSDOH will be enhancing mosquito surveillance activities as the weather warms up and continue these efforts throughout the summer. Enhanced activities will include but not be limited to:
 - Additional trapping in Putnam, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster and Dutchess counties to determine whether *Aedes albopictus* has spread farther north.
 - Testing *Aedes albopictus* for Zika virus when they're collected during routine mosquito surveillance.
- Hospitals and providers must report suspected cases of Zika virus and all other arboviral diseases to the LHD where the patient resides. Providers who cannot reach their LHD can access 24/7/365 public health consultation from NYSDOH at **518-473-4439** during business hours and **866-881-2809** evenings, weekends, and holidays.

If you have any questions, please contact your LHD or the NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at bcdc@health.ny.gov.