



# Department of Health

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.**  
Commissioner

**SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.**  
Executive Deputy Commissioner

August 1, 2016

**TO: Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, Local Health Departments (LHDs), Laboratories**  
**FROM: NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control**

**HEALTH ADVISORY: GUIDANCE FOR TRAVEL AND TESTING OF PREGNANT WOMEN AND WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE FOR ZIKA VIRUS INFECTION RELATED TO THE INVESTIGATION FOR LOCAL MOSQUITO-BORNE ZIKA VIRUS TRANSMISSION IN MIAMI-DADE AND BROWARD COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

*Please distribute to the Infection Control Department, Emergency Department, Infectious Disease Department, Obstetrics/Gynecology (including Nurse Practitioners and Midwives), Family Medicine, Travel Medicine Service, Pediatrics, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Laboratory Service, Pharmacy, and all patient care areas.*

## **SUMMARY**

- On August 1, 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued the attached CDC Health Advisory with travel and testing guidance for pregnant women and women of reproductive age related to the investigation for local mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties in Florida.
- This CDC Health Advisory recommends that pregnant women should avoid all non-essential travel to the area with active Zika virus transmission identified by the Florida Department of Health (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/intheus/florida-update.html>).
- Zika virus testing should be offered to pregnant women who have lived in or travelled to this area after June 15, 2016.
- Additional recommendations for pregnant women and their partners can be found in the CDC advisory, including recommendations for prevention of mosquito bites and prevention of Zika virus transmission through sexual contact.

## **ZIKA VIRUS TESTING**

The CDC Health Advisory includes testing recommendations for pregnant women with possible Zika virus exposure, including those with travel to the area with active Zika virus transmission identified by the Florida Department of Health. As explained in the [NYSDOH Zika Virus Update Health Advisory](#) released July 29, 2016, NYSDOH has expanded upon CDC's latest recommendations for the testing of pregnant women. Information from this NYSDOH Advisory specific to testing by the NYSDOH Wadsworth Center is reproduced below:

### *Testing for Pregnant Women: NYSDOH Expands Upon Latest CDC Recommendations*

- Ideally, pregnant women should be tested within two weeks after their potential exposure to Zika virus regardless of the presence of symptoms.<sup>1</sup> Prompt testing increases the likelihood that a definitive diagnosis can be made and allows optimal assessment for possible effects of Zika virus infection on fetal development. However, testing may be conducted at any time during pregnancy for women with a history of exposure.
- Persistent viremia has been identified by NYSDOH's Wadsworth Center in several pregnant women tested beyond six weeks after their last possible exposure to Zika virus. In one case, viremia was identified 53 days after the last possible exposure.
- Therefore, NYSDOH is expanding beyond CDC's recommendations for the eligibility criteria for its Zika testing program. rRT-PCR will be performed on specimens from all pregnant women submitted to the NYSDOH Wadsworth Center, regardless of the time that has elapsed from their last exposure. All specimens from pregnant women that are not positive by rRT-PCR will also undergo serological testing.

### *Eligibility and Public Health Laboratory Testing Process in NYS*

- For symptomatic individuals, including men, non-pregnant women, and children: Specimens collected within 4 weeks of symptom onset in those with possible exposure can be submitted for testing.
- For pregnant women: As described above.
- For patients with Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS): Specimens collected from patients who present with GBS after possible exposure to Zika virus can be submitted.
- For infants with microcephaly, intracranial calcifications, or other congenital abnormalities possibly associated with Zika virus and born to women who were exposed<sup>1</sup> to Zika virus while pregnant OR infants who do not have obvious congenital abnormalities at birth and were born to women who were equivocal or positive on Zika virus testing: Specimens can be submitted after birth or when the abnormality is identified.
- Preauthorization of testing by the LHD where the patient resides continues to be required for testing performed by NYSDOH's Wadsworth Center and NYCDOHMH's PHL.
  - For NYS residents living outside of NYC:
    - LHD contact information is available at: [https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/](https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/)
    - Providers must also provide the specimen collection site with a completed NYSDOH Infectious Diseases Requisition (IDR) form, which is available at [http://www.wadsworth.org/sites/default/files/WebDoc/1065760803/infectious\\_diseases\\_requisition\\_DOH\\_4463.pdf](http://www.wadsworth.org/sites/default/files/WebDoc/1065760803/infectious_diseases_requisition_DOH_4463.pdf).
  - For NYC residents, call the NYC DOHMH Provider Access Line at 866-692-3641.
- For additional information on Zika virus testing in NYS, see the July 29, 2016 [NYSDOH Zika Virus Update Health Advisory](#) which includes information and guidance on:
  - The importance of urine rRT-PCR testing
  - Availability of commercial Zika rRT-PCR testing and recommendations for additional antibody testing
  - Zika virus test results interpretation
  - Reporting to public health authorities
  - Mosquito surveillance and public information

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<sup>1</sup> Exposure is defined here as travel to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus or unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sexual exposure with a sexual partner who traveled to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus. Eligibility for testing includes those pregnant women with possible Zika virus exposure during the 8 weeks before conception (6 weeks before the last menstrual period).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

NYSDOH encourages providers to contact their [LHD](#) or the NYSDOH Zika Information line with any questions. The NYSDOH Zika Information line can be reached at (888) 364-4723 weekdays from 9 am to 5 pm. Additional information can be found on the NYSDOH website at [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov).