



VIDEO: Zika Crisis Grows In Florida, Officials Scramble To Contain Outbreak In Miami Beach

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CONGRESS STILL DEADLOCKED ON FUNDING

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TQpD8ZGqw5CsfuRxXGns2aBF_V3j7VV-3Na8M5fRpGM/edit#heading=h.spronxx79ixb

EDITOR'S NOTE: With the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirming reports of active Zika transmission in a second area of South Florida, it has issued an **updated travel guidance** that includes an area encompassing 1.5 square miles, between 8th and 28th streets of Miami Beach.

This cluster of cases in Florida where mosquito-borne transmission appears to be ongoing, and not just isolated cases, has been added to the Wynwood, **Design District** and **Midtown Miami** areas as high risk for Zika transmission.

The travel guidance now recommends that pregnant women should avoid travel to the area of Miami Beach, similar to the guidance already issued for the Wynwood area north of Miami.

The CDC is also recommending that pregnant women who have traveled to or live in this area of Miami Beach since July 14, 2016 should be tested for Zika virus, and engage in appropriate precautions for the duration of pregnancy.

Unfortunately, it has been difficult to detect local spread of Zika, because the incubation period can be up to two weeks, with diagnosis and investigation of cases taking several weeks — as well as that a large portion of people with Zika virus appear asymptomatic.

According to a statement issued by the state of Florida, 36 cases of local Zika virus transmission have been identified in the state.

“Following today’s news, I am asking the CDC for an additional 5,000 Zika antibody test kits to ensure we can quickly test people for the virus and additional lab support personnel to help us expedite Zika testing,” said Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) in a statement. “Also, to continue protecting pregnant women, I am renewing my call to the Obama Administration for an additional 10,000 Zika prevention kits.”

It is a shame that a public health issue of this magnitude has become a “political football,” as chronicled in the FOX News report below.

– Dr. Jim Palermo, Editor-in-Chief



Florida Gov. Rick Scott (at podium) and CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden (far left) answer questions at a press conference regarding the local transmission of Zika in the Miami and Miami Beach areas.

FOX NEWS — As Florida state and local officials scramble to contain a Zika virus outbreak in Miami Beach – a serious threat to the region’s \$24 billion-a-year tourism industry — congressional lawmakers from both parties continue to be locked in battle over a billion dollars in vital funding that experts say is needed to keep the virus from breaking out across America.

To underscore that Florida has become the latest “ground zero” in the U.S. mainland battle against the mosquito-borne virus, Republican Gov. Rick Scott **announced** Friday that there have been five new cases identified in Miami Beach, some involving tourists — while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a warning Friday that pregnant women should stay out the region. To date, there have been more than 500 reported cases of Zika in the Sunshine State, with 63 reported among pregnant women.

But Miami isn't the only hard-hit area.

Puerto Rico officials have **warned** that as many as 270 babies may be born with the severe birth defect known as microcephaly caused by Zika infections in their mothers during pregnancy. As of August 12, Puerto Rico had 10,690 laboratory-confirmed cases of Zika, including 1,035 pregnant women.

In New York City, 49 women have tested positive for Zika since April, and one baby has been born with microcephaly. Federal officials say that there have been 420 Zika cases in the Big Apple. The outbreak has pushed Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio to renew his calls for Congress to pass a significant funding bill.

In February the Obama administration asked for \$1.9 billion in order to fight the virus, including funding for vaccine development.

A \$1.1 billion funding package was proposed in the Senate, but the bill failed after Democrats claimed their Republican colleagues packed the legislation with politically-charged amendments — in particular, a provision that would block the use of \$95 million of federal grants to be used to distribute birth control for women in Puerto Rico.

Democrats claimed the restrictions were aimed to punish Planned Parenthood, but they also objected to provisions that would loosen restrictions on the use of pesticides.

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