

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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FACT SHEET: Preparing for and Responding to the Zika Virus at Home and Abroad

Since late last year, the Administration has been aggressively working to combat Zika, a virus primarily spread by mosquitoes that has recently been linked to birth defects and other concerning health outcomes. The Federal Government has been monitoring the Zika virus and working with our domestic and international public health partners to alert healthcare providers and the public about Zika; provide public health laboratories with diagnostic tests; and detect and report cases both domestically and internationally.

The Administration is taking every appropriate measure to protect the American people, and today announced that it is asking Congress for more than \$1.8 billion in emergency funding to enhance our ongoing efforts to prepare for and respond to the Zika virus, both domestically and internationally. The Administration will submit a formal request to Congress shortly.

The Pan American Health Organization reports 26 countries and territories in the Americas with local Zika transmission. While we have not yet seen transmission of the Zika virus by mosquitoes within the continental United States, Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories in warmer areas with *Aedes aegypti* mosquito populations are already seeing active transmission. In addition, some Americans have returned to the continental U.S. from affected countries in South America, Central America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands with Zika infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 50 laboratory-confirmed cases among U.S. travelers from December 2015-February 5, 2016. As spring and summer approach, bringing with them larger and more active

mosquito populations, we must be fully prepared to mitigate and quickly address local transmission within the continental U.S., particularly in the Southern United States.

The requested resources will build on our ongoing preparedness efforts and will support essential strategies to combat this virus, such as rapidly expanding mosquito control programs; accelerating vaccine research and diagnostic development; enabling the testing and procurement of vaccines and diagnostics; educating healthcare providers, pregnant women and their partners; improving epidemiology and expanding laboratory and diagnostic testing capacity; improving health services and supports for low-income pregnant women, and enhancing the ability of Zika-affected countries to better combat mosquitoes and control transmission.

There is much that we do not yet know about Zika and its relationship to the poor health outcomes that are being reported in Zika-affected areas. We must work aggressively to investigate these outbreaks, and mitigate, to the best extent possible, the spread of the virus. Congressional action on the Administration's request will accelerate our ability to prevent, detect and respond to the Zika virus and bolster our ability to reduce the potential for future infectious disease outbreaks.

Department of Health and Human Services - \$1.48 billion

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - \$828 million. The request includes funding to support prevention and response strategies through the following activities:

- Support Zika virus readiness and response capacity in States and territories with mosquito populations that are known to transmit Zika virus, with a priority focus on areas with ongoing Zika transmission;
- Enhance mosquito control programs through enhanced laboratory, epidemiology and surveillance capacity in at-risk areas to reduce the opportunities for Zika transmission;
- Establish rapid response teams to limit potential clusters of Zika virus in the United States;
- Improve laboratory capacity and infrastructure to test for Zika virus and other infectious diseases;
- Implement surveillance efforts to track Zika virus in communities and in mosquitoes;
- Deploy targeted prevention and education strategies with key populations, including pregnant women, their partners, and health care professionals;
- Expand the CDC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, improve Guillain Barré syndrome tracking, and ensure the ability of birth defect registries across the country to detect risks related to Zika;
- Increase research into the link between Zika virus infections and the birth defect microcephaly and measure changes in incidence rates over time;

- Enhance international capacity for virus surveillance, expand the Field Epidemiology Training program, laboratory testing, health care provider training, and vector surveillance and control in countries at highest risk of Zika virus outbreaks; and
- Improve diagnostics for Zika virus, including advanced methods to refine tests, and support advanced developments for vector control.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – \$250 million. The request seeks a temporary one-year increase in Puerto Rico’s Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to provide an estimated \$250 million in additional Federal assistance to support health services for pregnant women at risk of infection or diagnosed with Zika virus and for children with microcephaly, and other health care costs. This request does not make any changes to Puerto Rico’s underlying Medicaid program, and the additional funding will not be counted towards Puerto Rico’s current Medicaid allotment. Puerto Rico is experiencing ongoing active transmission of Zika. Unlike States, Puerto Rico’s Medicaid funding is capped, which has limited capacity to respond to these emergent and growing health needs.

Vaccine Research and Diagnostic Development & Procurement – \$200 million. The request includes \$200 million for research, rapid advanced development and commercialization of new vaccines and diagnostic tests for Zika virus. It includes funding for the National Institutes of Health to build upon existing resources and work to develop a vaccine for Zika virus and the chikungunya virus, which is spread by the same type of mosquito. Funding will accelerate this work and improve scientific understanding of the disease to inform the development of additional tools to combat it. The request also includes resources for the Food and Drug Administration to support Zika virus medical product development including the next generation diagnostic devices.

Other HHS Response Activities – \$210 million. The request includes funding to establish a new Urgent and Emerging Threat Fund to address Zika virus and other outbreaks. This funding would be available to support emerging needs related to Zika, including additional support to States for emerging public health response needs should mosquito populations known to be potential Zika carriers migrate to additional States.

In addition, the request includes funding to support Puerto Rico’s community health centers in preventing, screening, and treating the Zika virus, expand home visiting services targeting low-income pregnant women at risk of Zika virus, and provide targeted maternal and child health.

U.S. Agency for International Development - \$335 million

The request includes investments to support affected countries' ability to control mosquitoes and the transmission of the virus; support maternal health; expand public education on prevention and response; and create new incentives for the development of vaccines and diagnostics. The request would also provide flexibility in the use of remaining USAID Ebola funds. Activities would focus particularly on South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and would:

- Implement integrated vector management activities in countries at-risk of Zika virus;
- Stimulate private sector research and development of vaccines, diagnostics, and vector control innovations through public private partnerships and mechanisms to provide incentives such as advance market commitments or volume guarantees;
- Support training of health care workers in affected countries, including providing information about best practices for supporting children with microcephaly;
- Support for pregnant women's health, including helping them access repellent to protect against mosquitos.
- Establish education campaigns to empower communities in affected countries to take actions to protect themselves from Zika Virus as well as other mosquito-borne diseases; and
- Issue a Global Health Security Grand Challenge calling for groundbreaking innovations in diagnostics, vector control, personal protection, community engagement and surveillance for Zika and other infectious diseases.

U.S. Department of State - \$41 million

The funding request includes support for U.S. citizens in affected countries, medical support for State Department employees in affected countries, public diplomacy, communications, and other operations activities. State would also support the World Health Organization and its regional arm, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), to minimize the Zika threat in affected countries while reducing the risk of further spreading the virus. These resources will support critical public health actions underway, including preparedness, surveillance, data collection, and risk communication. Activities would also include support for UNICEF's Zika response efforts in Brazil; activities to bolster diagnostic capabilities through deployment of equipment and specialized training.

For more information on the Zika virus and CDC guidance about how Americans can protect themselves, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.