



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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NEWS RELEASE

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HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECEIVES CONFIRMATION OF ZIKA INFECTION IN BABY BORN WITH MICROCEPHALY

HONOLULU -- The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) has received laboratory confirmation from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of a past Zika virus infection in a baby recently born with microcephaly in a hospital on Oahu. The mother likely had Zika infection when she was residing in Brazil in May 2015 and her newborn acquired the infection in the womb. Neither the baby nor the mother are infectious, and there was never a risk of transmission in Hawaii.

"We are saddened by the events that have affected this mother and her newborn," said DOH State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park. "This case further emphasizes the importance of the CDC travel recommendations released today. Mosquitos can carry serious diseases, as we know too well with our current dengue outbreak and it is imperative that we all Fight the Bite by reducing mosquito breeding areas, avoiding places with mosquitos, and applying repellent as needed."

To date, there have been no cases of Zika virus acquired in Hawaii. Since 2014, the department has identified six persons in the state who acquired their infection in another country. Physicians are required to report all suspected cases of Zika virus and more than 75 other reportable diseases in the state. Physician reporting is crucial to conducting an effective disease surveillance program in Hawaii.

“In this situation, an astute Hawaii physician recognized the possible role of Zika virus infection, immediately notified the Department of Health, and worked with us to confirm the suspected diagnosis,” said Dr. Park. “We rely on our exceptional medical community to be our eyes and ears in the field to control and prevent the spread of illness in Hawaii.”

The department sent a Medical Advisory to physicians statewide today as a reminder that while Zika virus is not endemic in the U.S., it can be acquired in a number of countries and travel history should always be considered.

Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat Zika.

For more information on Zika virus go to <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/> and for CDC travel recommendations, go to <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices> .

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