

TOWN OF DIGHTON

BOARD OF HEALTH

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ZIKA Virus Presentation

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

June 16, 2016

The following is a brief summary of the presentation by Dr. Alfred DeMaria, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Disease Prevention, Response and Services, MA Dept. of Public Health; and state epidemiologist that took place at the Holiday Inn in Taunton, Massachusetts. The focus is on matters pertaining to our public health in town.

- ZIKA virus is a mosquito-borne disease that was first discovered in the Zikka Forest in Uganda
- It is endemic in Africa and has spread to the western hemisphere in 2014
- It can only be transmitted the following ways:
 - o Sexual contact
 - o From mosquito to human
 - o From human to mosquito
 - o From mother to baby in utero
- Risk of transmission is low in Massachusetts because the mosquitos that cause the virus are present in very low numbers
- 90% of individuals with ZIKA virus do not know they are infected because they do not exhibit symptoms
 - o Symptoms include: headache, fever, painful/red eyes (conjunctivitis), joint pain, itching/rash (most common), and muscle pain
- It is associated with encephalitis, in particular meningoencephalitis (inflammation of the brain)
 - o Mostly pregnant women in infected areas are affected
 - 2nd trimester is a time of particular susceptibility
 - o 1 in 10,000 births result in microcephaly (smaller than normal head) in Massachusetts
- It is also spread through sexual contact
 - o MDPH suggests that individuals who have traveled to infected areas who exhibit symptoms and are planning a pregnancy to wait before engaging in should practice safe sex for:
 - 8 weeks for females
 - 6 months for males
- Prevention methods include:
 - o Reduce mosquito exposure – window and door screens, netting, staying indoors during peak mosquito times
 - o Reduce mosquitos – reduce standing water, mosquito control
 - o Reduce mosquito bites – cover extremities, use repellants (e.g. Off, repellents containing DEET, and oil of lemon eucalyptus)