

Network Notification

Date: September 14
To: Kentucky Medicaid Health Care Providers
From: Humana – CareSource®
Subject: Pregnant Women, Travel and the Zika Virus

Know the Zika virus risk while traveling internationally

The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) warns Kentuckians, particularly pregnant women and women planning to become pregnant, to avoid travel to areas of the world with active Zika virus transmission.

As of Sept. 14, there were 43 reported cases of locally transmitted Zika virus in the U.S. and 2,920 cases among travelers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The virus primarily spreads through bites from infected mosquitoes. For a full list of affected countries and regions, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>.

Kentuckians planning international travel are particularly encouraged to consult the CDC's Travelers' Health Website, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>, for country-specific health information, including information about travel to areas affected by the Zika virus (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>).

State officials remind residents to follow the three Ds for mosquito bite prevention:

- Dress – Wear light-colored long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Drain – Eliminate all standing water where mosquitoes breed such as bird baths, tires, buckets and gutters
- Defend – Use an insect repellent, which has been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, at all times for outdoor activities.

International travelers to at-risk countries who develop fever, rash, joint pain, red inflamed eyes and other acute symptoms within two weeks of return to Kentucky should consult with their primary medical provider.

Know the Zika risk for women who are pregnant

Increasing scientific evidence suggests a link between infection in pregnant women and infants born with birth defects such as microcephaly. Microcephaly is a condition in which the head of an infant is smaller than normal and is likely associated with significant central nervous system abnormalities and lifelong complications. Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent infection and no specific antiviral treatment for Zika infection. Its most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes, although many infected individuals have no symptoms at all.

The CDC recommends pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant take the following precautions:

- **Pregnant women should not travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is active.** Pregnant women who must travel to these areas must talk to their doctor or other health care professional first and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.
- Due to reports of possible Zika transmission through sexual contact, CDC recommends pregnant women avoid sexual contact with men who recently returned from areas where Zika transmission has occurred. CDC recommends men who traveled to a Zika-affected area and developed symptoms consistent with Zika during travel or two weeks after travel, use condoms for six months after symptoms begin or to abstain from sex for six months. CDC recommends men who have traveled to a Zika-affected area and did not develop any symptoms use condoms for at least eight weeks after departure from Zika-affected areas or abstain from sex for eight weeks.