



GOV. CHRIS CHRISTIE | LT. GOV. KIM GUADAGNO | DIR. CHRIS RODRIGUEZ

# NJOHSP

## EXECUTIVE RESILIENCY BRIEF

OCTOBER 5, 2016

### Zika: Assessing the Risk from Flights to Cuba

*New Jersey is taking proactive steps to mitigate the risk of Zika virus disease transmission as flights from Newark to Havana begin in November.* Cuba is a country where Zika is spread by mosquitoes and one of many areas in the Americas—including southern Florida in the US—that have local transmission of the virus. New Jersey is home to the second largest Cuban-American population in the US—Florida is the first—with about 83,000 residents, suggesting the volume of travelers to the island will be relatively high compared to other parts of the country.

- New Jersey’s Department of Health (NJDOH), Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), local health departments and the State’s 21 county mosquito control agencies are actively collaborating on mosquito surveillance, abatement, and communications. For example, at [www.nj.gov/health](http://www.nj.gov/health), NJDOH advises the use of insect repellent and mosquito netting, as well as long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Pregnant women are advised to avoid traveling to Cuba and other areas with Zika.
- Although the primary mosquito species that transmits Zika—*Aedes aegypti*—is not in New Jersey, *Aedes albopictus*, or the Asian Tiger mosquito, is in the State and has the potential to carry Zika. The Asian Tiger mosquito is present in every New Jersey county, but it remains inactive in colder weather.
- In the event of confirmed local transmission in New Jersey, NJDOH and NJDEP would work with local and federal partners to investigate and contain the vector and disease. The State Emergency Operations Center may be activated. In addition, by November 18, 2016, all blood collection centers licensed by New Jersey will expand current Zika screening protocols to include universal testing of donated blood for the virus.

#### Zika in New Jersey

As of October 3, 2016, there have been 137 confirmed cases of Zika in New Jersey, all the result of travel to a Zika country. No person in the State has experienced transmission through a local mosquito bite—only Florida has—and unlike a cold or the flu, it cannot be passed via coughing or sneezing. It can, however, be sexually transmitted and passed from pregnant women to their unborn children, causing certain birth defects. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Zika symptoms are mild and only affect approximately one out of five infected individuals. Symptoms include a fever, rash, or eye redness that usually pass in a few days.

For more information, please contact NJOHSP’s Preparedness Bureau at [preparedness@njohsp.gov](mailto:preparedness@njohsp.gov) or 609-584-4000.



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