

# Press Release

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## **CDC awards Texas \$563,000 to help battle Zika**

*Funding is stopgap measure to help states respond to emerging threat, protect pregnant women*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will award \$563,000 to Texas to fight the Zika virus. The award is Texas's share of about \$60 million CDC is awarding to states, cities, and territories to support efforts to protect Americans from Zika virus disease and adverse health outcomes that can result from Zika infection, including the serious birth defect microcephaly.

The funding is in addition to \$25 million awarded on July 1 as part of CDC's preparedness and response funding to states, cities, and territories in areas at risk for outbreaks of Zika. On August 1, CDC also will award another \$10 million to quickly identify cases of microcephaly and other adverse birth outcomes linked to Zika and to refer affected infants and families to services.

The Obama Administration has requested \$1.9 billion that public health experts identified as necessary to combat Zika and protect the homeland, but the budget has not been approved by Congress.

"Our local, state and territorial health departments are on the front lines in the fight against Zika, and though the necessary funding that is needed isn't yet available, we cannot wait to provide this essential support," said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "These CDC funds will strengthen state and territorial capacity to respond to Zika virus, an increasingly concerning public health threat."

The new funding will support activities to protect the health of the American public, especially pregnant women, through epidemiologic surveillance and investigation, strengthening laboratory capacity, and improving mosquito control and monitoring. It will also support participation in the U.S. Zika Pregnancy Registry to monitor pregnant women with Zika and their infants, as well as Zika-related activities in U.S.-Mexico border states. However, additional support will be needed to help expand mosquito control capabilities and develop a Zika vaccine and diagnostics, among other priorities.

Zika virus spreads to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*), although *Aedes aegypti* are more likely to spread Zika. Zika infection can also be spread by men and women to their sex partners. There is currently no vaccine or treatment for Zika. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. However, Zika infection during pregnancy may cause microcephaly and other severe brain defects in the developing fetus. Zika also has

been linked to Guillain-Barré syndrome, an uncommon sickness of the nervous system in which a person's immune system damages nerve cells, causing muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis or death.

The new Zika funding, about \$60 million, is being distributed through CDC's [Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Diseases Cooperative Agreement](#) (ELC), which supports an array of federal projects to strengthen the ability of domestic public health departments to respond to emerging and re-emerging infectious disease threats.

ELC funding is distributed annually. This year, which includes increased funding for Zika and fighting antibiotic resistance, ELC awarded \$240 million to help states detect, prevent, and respond to the growing threats posed by infectious diseases, including foodborne and vaccine-preventable diseases. Last year's ELC award was nearly \$110 million.

In addition to the Zika funding, Texas will receive an additional \$4 million through FY16 ELC funding for:

- Activities related to CDC's Antibiotic Resistance Solutions Initiative, aimed at the growing threat of antimicrobial resistant bacteria, as well as activities to reduce healthcare-associated infections.
- Foodborne disease prevention and tracking. This includes increased support for the [PulseNet](#) and [OutbreakNet](#) systems and for the Integrated Food Safety Centers of Excellence including the new Northeast Regional Center, plus continued support for the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS).
- Establishing and maintaining local, state, and territorial health coordinators to track vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and whooping cough.
- Rapid detection of and response to the antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea threat in nine states.
- Building capacity for Advanced Molecular Detection, an emerging field that combines next-generation genomic sequencing with bioinformatics to more quickly identify and respond to disease outbreaks.

For more information on CDC's ELC Cooperative Agreement and the breakdown of FY16 funding, please visit the ELC webpage at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dpei/epidemiology-laboratory-capacity.html>.

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