

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Celeste Philip, MD, MPH**  
Surgeon General and Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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August 5, 2016

Dear Prenatal and Obstetrical Health Care Provider:

As you are aware, local transmission of Zika virus was recently identified in a small area of the Wynwood community in Miami, Florida. Because of this event, updated Zika virus guidance is being provided by the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In consultation with Governor Rick Scott and the CDC, DOH encourages all providers to continue following DOH and CDC guidance on appropriate risk-based Zika testing (see updated DOH guidance, attached). However, some patients and providers will continue to have concerns. To allay those fears, Governor Scott has directed DOH to make Zika virus risk assessment (e.g., recent travel history to an impacted country or the Wynwood area, sexual partner with recent travel history to an impacted country or the Wynwood area), and testing available to pregnant women at county health departments statewide at no cost to them. It is important, however, that women be advised of and understand the risks associated with testing outside of the CDC and DOH guidelines, including the possibility of false positives, false negatives and long waits for confirmatory testing results.

**Importantly, all pregnant women should be assessed for possible Zika virus exposure during each prenatal care visit through determining travel history, where the woman lives/works, sexual history (e.g., contact with someone who had Zika exposure or infection).**

Providers should use their clinical judgment, informed by DOH and CDC guidance, to obtain Zika testing for their pregnant patients through commercial laboratories without approval by the county health department. Pregnant women who meet the criteria for testing but who are uninsured, underinsured, or otherwise cannot obtain testing through a commercial laboratory should be directed to the county health department for testing. Pregnant woman who do not meet the DOH and CDC criteria for testing but desire testing nonetheless, should be counseled on the risks and benefits of testing (e.g., false positives and false negatives) and be directed to the county health department for testing. When referring patients to the county health department for testing, please ensure they bring with them completed laboratory requisition forms and the symptom/travel history form (attached).

Details on appropriate testing for Zika virus in pregnant women may be found at: [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6529e1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6529e1\\_e](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6529e1.htm?s_cid=mm6529e1_e) and at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/pregnant-woman.html>. Guidance for testing of pregnant women who live, work or travel in the DoH identified area of concern for local transmission is available in the attached DoH document and at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00393.asp>;

Pregnant women with possible exposure to Zika virus and who have compatible signs or symptoms should be tested based on the time of evaluation relative to symptom onset.

Pregnant women with ongoing risk of possible Zika virus exposure who are asymptomatic, should be tested in the first and second trimester of pregnancy.

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- Women with ongoing risk of possible exposure include those who live in or frequently travel to the area of Florida with active Zika virus transmission identified by DOH.

Pregnant women with limited risk of exposure who are asymptomatic should consult with their provider to obtain testing based on the elapsed interval since their last possible exposure.

- Women with limited risk include those who traveled to the area of Florida with active Zika virus transmission identified by DOH, or had sex with a partner who lives in or traveled to the areas without using condoms or other barrier methods to prevent infection.

**Please continue to notify your local health department of any suspected cases of Zika virus infection, especially if you suspect a case from local transmission. This is critical to initiating mosquito control efforts and preventing further spread of disease.**

Thank you very much for the quality health care you provide to Floridians, especially to our most vulnerable populations. I also thank you for your dedicated efforts to help prevent Zika virus infection in Florida and mitigate its consequences, especially for our pregnant women and their children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna M. Likos MD MPH". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "MD MPH" written in a slightly different style at the end.

Anna M. Likos, MD, MPH  
State Epidemiologist  
Interim Deputy Secretary for Health

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