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STATE SURGEON GENERAL DR. JOHN ARMSTRONG TESTIFIES BEFORE U.S. CONGRESS ON ZIKA VIRUS READINESS



Contact:

Communications Office

NewsMedia@flhealth.gov

850-245-4111

Tallahassee, Fla.—State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong testified today before the United States Congress Transportation and Public Assets Subcommittee on Florida’s response and preparations to the Zika virus, based on CDC guidance, to ensure residents and visitors are safe.

“Thanks to the leadership of Governor Rick Scott and the robust epidemiological and public laboratory infrastructure we have at the Florida Department of Health we’ve been able to stay ahead of Zika virus,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “We have a rich history of managing emerging public health threats in Florida and we are committed to keeping residents and visitors safe in our state.”

Florida has taken a proactive approach to combating Zika virus that has gained national attention. On Feb. 3, Governor Scott directed State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong to issue a Declaration of Public Health Emergency for the counties of residents with travel-associated cases of Zika. The Declaration currently includes the 11 affected counties. Each week day, Dr. John Armstrong issues a Zika virus update to keep Florida residents and visitors safe and aware about the status of the Zika virus. Dr. Armstrong was the only state-level official in any state to be asked to present.

Per the request of Governor Scott, the department has received antibody test kits from the CDC and purchased active Zika tests to maintain an adequate level of readiness. The department has provided guidance, based on CDC recommendations, to health care professionals – particularly those who treat pregnant women.

Today, after learning of three pregnant women in Florida who tested positive for a history of the Zika virus after traveling outside the U.S., Governor Rick Scott requested the CDC send 250 additional Zika antibody tests to the state.

The department has also established a Zika virus information hotline for current Florida residents and visitors, as well as anyone planning on traveling to Florida in the near future. The hotline, managed by the department, has assisted hundreds of callers since it launched.

For more information on Zika virus, click [here](#).

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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