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PRESS RELEASE

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Gov. Scott Authorizes \$25 Million in State Funds for Zika Virus Vaccine Research and Development

MIAMI, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott announced that following the inaction of the federal government to allocate funding to fight Zika, \$25 million in state funds will be authorized to support research to develop a vaccine against the Zika virus and enhance Zika testing methods. To date, Governor Scott has used his emergency executive authority to authorize \$61.2 million in state funds for Zika, including \$26.2 million in July, \$10 million last week for Zika preparedness and preparation and \$25 million today for research and development. The \$25 million in state funding will be allocated following a competitive grant process by the Florida Department of Health. This funding will be spent for the purpose of Zika research, including:

- Expediting the development of a vaccine to prevent Zika infection; and
- The development of innovative, cost-effective Zika testing methods.

Governor Scott said, “We must focus on finding a vaccine and enhancing our Zika testing capabilities to further protect pregnant women and their developing babies. Today, I am authorizing \$25 million in state funds to support research to help develop a vaccine against the Zika virus here in Florida. I have traveled multiple times to Washington this year to meet with Congressional leaders to tell them how urgent this need is. Yet, despite endless claims of support from those within both parties, nothing has been done. Every minute that passes that Congress doesn’t approve funding means more time is lost from researching this virus. For the sake of our state’s future children, this is time we cannot afford to waste.

“Every action we take against the Zika virus is to help protect pregnant women and keep their developing babies healthy. This \$25 million is a step forward for research and development in order to find a vaccine, but we still need the federal government to do their part to fully fund this mission. While I hope the federal government will recognize the dire importance of developing a vaccine and immediately pass funding, we will continue to allocate every available resource from the state. I look forward to seeing research partners across Florida come together to help combat the Zika virus and ensure our state is safe.”

The Florida Department of Health will oversee the grant process to distribute Zika vaccine research funding. More details will be released in the coming days.

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