



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CITES INVESTIGATES TRAVEL RELATED CASES OF MOSQUITO BORNE ILLNESSES ON OAHU**

### **Vector Teams Conducting Assessments**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health is investigating four cases of travel related mosquito borne viruses on Oahu. The cases include an individual who traveled to Latin America, returned ill, and is being tested for dengue and Zika virus, as well as individuals who are being tested for dengue fever and chikungunya and have a history of travel to the Pacific Islands and Latin America. All of the individuals have recovered.

Initial lab tests for the first individual referenced above conducted by the State Laboratories Division were not conclusive, and further testing will be conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The department's Vector Control teams have been assessing residential and other areas in urban Honolulu and along the North Shore this week to determine if mosquito control measure such as eliminating mosquito breeding sites or spraying to reduce adult mosquitos will be necessary.

Dengue fever, Zika, and chikungunya are all mosquito borne viruses that are spread when a sick person is bitten by a mosquito, which later bites another person. Evidence suggests that Zika can also be transmitted through unprotected sexual contact with someone who has been infected. The best way to prevent all these viruses is to take mosquito control measures and to avoid getting bitten. Some who carry Zika do not show symptoms, and in others, illness may last from several days to over a week. There is currently no cure for these viruses.

"The department expects to see more of these travel related cases as outbreaks of all these diseases continue in other countries," said Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. "The

department is working closely with the counties and taking precautionary measures to respond to all suspected and confirmed cases. We ask for the public's help in reducing mosquito breeding areas around homes and workplaces and preventing mosquito bites by using repellent or protective clothing."

Department of Health staff will continue to conduct site visits in various areas on Oahu in the coming week to assess problem areas for mosquito breeding and inform residents of the need to take precautions against mosquito-borne viruses. Residents who are not at home when a Vector Control team visits their neighborhood will receive a flyer or letter from the Department of Health and are advised to read the information carefully.

The public is advised that anyone who has traveled outside the country and has mild to severe symptoms such as fever, joint pain, rash, or red/pink eyes within 2 weeks after returning from travel should see their healthcare provider. All residents and visitors should avoid getting mosquito bites by using repellent and wearing light-colored clothing with long sleeves, pants, shoes and socks when outdoors. Residents should fix broken window and door screens at home, and get rid of standing water in the yard. Old tires, buckets, toys and plants, especially bromeliads, can become breeding sites for mosquitos.

For more tips on how to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne viruses, visit [health.hawaii.gov](http://health.hawaii.gov).

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