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### **HAWAII TEAM ATTENDS NATIONAL ZIKA ACTION PLAN SUMMIT HELD AT U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION**

HONOLULU – The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today held a Zika Action Plan Summit, bringing together state and local senior officials to provide them with the information and tools needed to improve Zika preparedness and response within their state and jurisdictions. A delegation of leaders from the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) are attending the summit at CDC Headquarters in Atlanta to share their experiences and learn from their counterparts across the country.

This timely opportunity comes as the state is experiencing an uptick in imported Zika cases, among other mosquito-borne illnesses, such as dengue fever and chikungunya. Attendees were provided with presentations on the latest scientific knowledge about the Zika virus, including effects it can have on pregnant women and best-practices for mosquito control. One of the greatest challenges posed by this disease is that scientists are still learning more about Zika's symptoms and how the disease can be transmitted.

“The summit provided an excellent opportunity for Hawaii to share our experience and knowledge while learning from other states about specific issues around the science behind Zika. This is especially important for our nation as we head into the summer months, when temperatures will rise and travel into and out of the country will peak,” said Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. “It is crucial for Hawaii to have a unified outreach and response plan that is both scalable and flexible, and easily implemented at all levels of government.”

The summit also provided an opportunity to discuss communications challenges and effective strategies for increasing public awareness about Zika virus and precautionary measures that all people should take, especially pregnant women and women planning on becoming pregnant.

Pregnant women need to take special precautions against Zika virus and should avoid travel to areas where Zika is spreading. If a Zika infected mosquito bites a woman that is pregnant or may become pregnant, the Zika virus can be passed to her baby during pregnancy or at the time of birth. Scientists believe the Zika virus may be linked to microcephaly in newborns, a birth defect where a baby's head is smaller than expected when compared with other babies of the same sex and age.

Scientists also believe that Zika virus can be spread from an infected man to his sexual partners. It is still unknown how long the virus can be spread in this way after the infected male's symptoms have cleared.

Most people who contract the Zika virus will have mild or no symptoms. The most common symptoms of Zika include rash, joint pain and red eyes (conjunctivitis), but can also include muscle pain and headaches. DOH urges people who are showing symptoms and have a recent history of travel to areas experiencing Zika outbreaks, to see their healthcare provider as soon as possible for testing.

For additional information about Zika virus and precautions, visit DOH's Disease Outbreak Control Division's website at [http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/dib/disease/zika\\_virus/](http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/dib/disease/zika_virus/). For travel information and advisories, visit CDC's website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>.

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