

The Virgin Islands Consortium

First Case Of Zika Confirmed In St. Thomas

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ST. THOMAS -- The Department of Health said on Monday afternoon that it received confirmation over the weekend that a 39-year-old man from this island tested positive for the Zika virus. The confirmation represents the first case of the virus here, even as confirmed cases on St. Croix have jumped to 11 as of last Tuesday.

"The department anticipates additional cases will be confirmed as new lab results come back from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To date, 243 total samples have been received from St. Thomas and St. John district. Of these, 45 were received from symptomatic individuals," Dr. Michelle Davis, commissioner nominee of D.O.H., said. The department has also received test results for 9 samples: two of which were dengue positive as previously reported, and the one Zika positive case we are reporting

today; the remaining six were negative, Ms. Davis added.

"The Department of Health continues to test pregnant women without symptoms of Zika. As of today, DOH has received samples for 402 pregnant women. Lab results have been received for 152, and all have been negative, except for the two previously reported dengue positives. No cases of Zika have been confirmed in pregnant women. C.D.C. has recommended all asymptomatic pregnant women residing in areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission be tested at the initiation of prenatal care with follow-up testing mid-second trimester," added Kimberly Jones, deputy commissioner of D.O.H.

According to the release, the department has been preparing for additional cases in the territory and taking steps to educate the public on how to protect themselves from mosquito bites to prevent the virus from spreading further, including increasing public outreach and education on St. Thomas and St. John over the past two weeks.

D.O.H. said it has been preparing for the disease by:

- Enhancing surveillance and lab testing capacity to detect cases. D.O.H. is working in collaboration with C.D.C. to expand local capacity to conduct initial Zika testing on St. Croix.
- Providing clinical recommendations and reinforcing healthcare infection control and other measures with local healthcare providers across all three islands.
- Educating the community about Zika through public outreach, media and social media. D.O.H. and C.D.C. officials will attend an upcoming public town hall on St. John on March 30 to share information with the community about Zika prevention.
- Administering local implementation of the C.D.C. contract for vector control.

The release also states that the department continues to distribute Zika prevention kits for pregnant women in the territory. And as of today, a total of 104 kits have been distributed from the initial 250 kits shipped by C.D.C. earlier this month. Additional kits will be delivered in the coming weeks.

Pregnant women can pick-up the free kits at the following locations:

St. Croix

Department of Health MCH Clinic

Department of Health WIC Clinic

Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center

Frederiksted Health Center

St. John

Health Care Connection

Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center

Morris F. de Castro Clinic

St. Thomas

Department of Health MCH Clinic (Pediatric)

Department of Health Community Health Clinic (Prenatal)

Roy Lester Schneider Hospital

East End Medical Center

For local information about Zika virus, call the Department of Health Emergency Operations Center at (340) 712-6205. For more general information about the Zika virus call toll free: 1-800-CDC-INFO.

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