

Zika Virus Information

The Zika virus pandemic continues to evolve. We want to update you on what we know about the public health effects of the virus and to support your efforts in providing care to Amerigroup* patients at risk for exposure.

Zika virus was declared a worldwide health emergency in February 2016. It is a mosquito-borne virus capable of causing a mild illness that in most people is asymptomatic. It can; however, pose a risk in pregnant women of serious birth defects, including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities. The virus can be sexually transmitted. Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare disorder causing muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis, has also been reported in patients following suspected Zika virus infection. Here is what is known about the Zika virus:

- The virus is actively transmitted in many areas, including Puerto Rico, Mexico, and 20 countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean, Pacific Islands and Africa.
- The mosquitos that carry Zika are present in 30 U.S. states. The areas most likely to be affected include the Gulf States, including cities in southern Florida and south Texas.
- In April 2013, the CDC published a special report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concluding that there is a causal relationship between prenatal Zika virus and microcephaly and other neurological disorders, including Guillain-Barré syndrome.
- The FDA has begun emergency use approval for commercially available tests that can detect the Zika virus during the first week of symptoms. The CDC performs antibody testing that can be done after the virus is gone from the blood stream.
- The CDC has established a Zika Registry for pregnant women exposed to the virus.
- There is no treatment or vaccine for Zika virus infections. Medical care is directed at alleviating symptoms. The focus is on prevention of exposure by avoiding travel to areas with active Zika transmission and by protecting against mosquito bites.
- Our medical coverage includes testing and evaluation for Zika virus. We support the CDC's current recommendations for screening, testing and management of pregnant women, including serial ultrasounds in certain scenarios.
- Recommendations on counseling, diagnosis and testing of persons exposed, including pregnant women and women considering pregnancy, can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/index.html>.
- Member information, including advice on how to avoid exposure is attached for your information.
- For your state's Zika information, visit www.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/2478.

The document *Zika Virus Frequently Asked Questions and Resources* is attached and can also be located on our provider website.

<https://providers.healthybluel.com>

Healthy Blue is the trade name of Community Care Health Plan of Louisiana, Inc., an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

BLAPEC-0066-17 July 2017