

With 14 local Zika cases, Florida asks for emergency aid

August 1 2016

Florida now has 14 people who likely contracted the Zika virus from mosquitoes in the Miami area, and the state needs emergency help from the federal government, officials said Monday.

Governor Rick Scott announced 10 new cases of locally transmitted Zika, in addition to four made public by the department of health on Friday.

The cases mark the first time the Zika virus, which can cause [birth defects](#) and is considered particularly dangerous for [pregnant women](#), is known to be spreading via local mosquitoes in the United States.

Over 1,600 cases of Zika have been previously reported in the US, but most were brought by travelers who were infected elsewhere. The virus can also spread by [sexual contact](#).

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are expected to issue "a notice to women who are pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant to avoid unnecessary travel to the impacted area that is just north of downtown Miami," Scott added in a statement.

Officials still believe the transmission is confined to a square-mile area north of Miami, a popular arts and restaurant district known as Wynwood.

Scott asked for the CDC to dispatch an emergency team of specialists

"to augment our response efforts to confirmed local transmissions of the Zika virus."

Two of the 14 cases involve women and the rest are men.

Funding for the Zika response has been a source of dispute among US lawmakers.

President Barack Obama asked for \$1.9 billion in February, but Republicans protested, saying the money should be taken from funds previously set aside for Ebola. Congress went on summer recess last month without approving any legislation for Zika funds.

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Citation: With 14 local Zika cases, Florida asks for emergency aid (2016, August 1) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-08-local-zika-cases-florida-emergency.html>

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