

Miami's Wynwood cleared of Zika; focus shifts to Miami Beach

September 20 2016, by Jennifer Kay



A Miami police officer holds back protestor Judd Allison, right, as Florida Gov. Rick Scott leaves a news conference at Wynwood Walls, Monday, Sept. 19, 2016, in the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami. The governor said the arts district is no longer considered a zone of active Zika transmission. It has been 45 days since the last Zika detection. Allison was protesting the use of the pesticide naled, which was used in the area to combat Zika. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

With health authorities declaring a win against Zika in Miami's

Wynwood arts district, their emphasis shifts to the remaining transmission zone on nearby Miami Beach, where residents have objected to the aerial pesticide spraying credited with halting infections.

No new cases of Zika have been reported in Wynwood since early August, and on Monday health officials declared it to be no longer a zone of active local transmission.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lifted a warning for [pregnant women](#) to stay out of Wynwood altogether, but continued to caution them about traveling to the city and surrounding areas out of concerns for catching the virus, which can cause serious [birth defects](#). In nearby Miami Beach, health officials have broadened their declared zone of active local transmission.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott and CDC officials attributed the drop-off in infections in Wynwood to aggressive [aerial spraying](#) with naled, an insecticide that targets adult mosquitoes, and street-level spraying with another pesticide that kills mosquito larvae. Scott said residents and business owners who kept their properties clear of standing water also helped.

"We're doing everything we can do to educate the public and have the same success in Miami Beach as we have in Wynwood," Scott said.

Wynwood was the first place on the U.S. mainland where mosquitoes began transmitting Zika. Health officials say that over the past several weeks, mosquito control workers there have seen fewer of the insects, the main culprits in spreading the virus.

"The message with Wynwood is it was a huge success," said Dr. Lyle Petersen of the CDC. "This outbreak would have kept going without the aerial spraying."



Florida Gov. Rick Scott, center, speaks with the news media after a news conference at Wynwood Walls, Monday, Sept. 19, 2016, in the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami. The governor said the arts district is no longer considered a zone of active Zika transmission. It has been 45 days since the last Zika detection. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

But despite months of public outreach and aggressive mosquito control measures, including the removal of cylinder-shaped tropical plants that trap water where insects can breed, Florida health officials have continued to find Zika-carrying mosquitoes in Miami Beach.

Miami Beach's tall buildings and ocean breezes make aerial spraying of naled there more difficult than in Wynwood, Petersen said.

Many residents there have objected to the aerial spraying despite assurances from health officials that they are using concentrations of the chemical that are safe for humans.

The city's infection zone has expanded from just South Beach to a 4.5-square-mile (12-square kilometer) area encompassing most of 7-mile-long (11-kilometer long) island, Scott's office announced late Friday.

A plane contracted by Miami-Dade County mosquito control officials sprayed naled over South Beach on Sunday. It was the city's third aerial spraying. A fourth is scheduled Saturday.

Of 85 non-travel-related Zika cases in Florida residents, 31 were associated with Wynwood and 36 with Miami Beach, Florida Department of Health spokeswoman Mara Gambineri said in an email Monday. Another 10 people who aren't Florida residents also have contracted Zika in the state.

Zika infections are mild for most people but can cause severe brain-related birth defects, including a dangerously small head, if women are infected during pregnancy.



Florida Gov. Rick Scott speaks during a news conference at Wynwood Walls, Monday, Sept. 19, 2016, in the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami. The governor said the arts district is no longer considered a zone of active Zika transmission. It has been 45 days since the last Zika detection. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

Local officials and business leaders joined Scott at a Wynwood art gallery to try and reassure residents and tourists fearful of Zika.

"It's a great day in Wynwood. Everybody, please come back," Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez said.

Zak Stern was offering free lunches for pregnant women visiting his Wynwood bakery, Zak the Baker, to celebrate the state's announcement. He couldn't estimate how much Zika had affected his business, but he questioned whether the response to the outbreak was proportionate to the

risk.

"The business owners, they were trying to make it seem like it's not such a big deal. The government was trying to show that they were doing something. The press was trying to show a story. The public was stuck in the middle, misinformed and afraid," Stern said.

Stern lives just north of the infection zone in Miami Beach, and his wife is due to give birth in about a month. He said the couple has tried to balance Zika with other safety recommendations for pregnant women.

"They tell you that you can't eat sushi, and they tell you that you can't eat soft cheese, and they tell that you can't drink, right? And now they're telling you that you can't go outside," he said. "Zika or no Zika, things can happen."

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