

# CDC updates spending plans to combat Zika

October 18 2016, by Dennis Thompson, Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is earmarking millions of dollars to prepare states and cities for future Zika virus outbreaks, and to track the effects of the virus on the unborn.

The CDC will steer \$25 million in recently approved funding to states and some cities for Zika preparedness and response efforts, agency Chief Operating Officer Sherri Berger said Tuesday.

The agency also plans to provide \$70 million to \$120 million to state health departments, for use in detecting and tracking the Zika virus, Berger added.

In addition, the CDC will provide \$10 million for states and cities to develop programs that will track Zika-affected babies born with microcephaly or other related birth defects, she said.

The CDC already has ongoing efforts to track Zika-affected births in the United States, which include a Zika pregnancy registry covering all the states and all U.S. territories except Puerto Rico, said Dr. Denise Jamieson, co-lead of the CDC Zika Virus Response Team's Pregnancy and Birth Defects Team.

Puerto Rico has been suffering the worst U.S. outbreak of Zika, with 25,355 locally acquired cases reported as of Oct. 12, according to the CDC. A more in-depth Zika pregnancy registry has been established there, which involves active medical record reviews, Jamieson said.

The CDC also is supporting studies of Zika-affected pregnancies in Colombia and Brazil, the epicenter of the outbreak, she added.

Zika is the first mosquito-borne virus known to cause terrible [birth defects](#), most of them brain-related.

The most common defect is microcephaly, in which a child is born with an abnormally small brain and skull. Thousands of babies have been born with Zika-linked microcephaly, most of them in Brazil, since an outbreak began in South America in April 2015.

The expenditures discussed Tuesday by the CDC are part of \$1.1 billion in Zika response funding approved by Congress late last month.

Because of the Congressional spending package, the CDC also will be restoring about \$44.25 million in [public health](#) emergency preparedness money that had been re-routed to pay for early Zika response efforts, said Dr. Stephen Redd, director of the CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response.

The money already had been awarded to all 50 states, four cities and eight territories, but was diverted to Zika response when Congress did not promptly approve a request by President Barack Obama in February for additional Zika funding, Redd said.

All of the grantees "will receive their notices of award by the end of the day," Redd said.

The emergency preparedness money can be spent to prepare for Zika, or for any other potential public health threat, Redd said. It includes \$2.6 million awarded earlier to Florida, which the state can use in its Zika response efforts.

Florida is the only state to report local cases of Zika transmitted by mosquitoes, but health officials have warned in the past that mosquitoes could transmit the virus in other Gulf Coast states such as Louisiana and Texas.

Caitlyn Miller, director of the Division of Discretionary Programs in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said about \$75 million of the newly approved money will be used to cover the cost of treating uninsured people in states and territories with active Zika infection.

Another \$66 million will be directly targeted at Puerto Rico and the U.S.

territories, including \$40 million to expand delivery of health care services, Miller said.

**More information:** For more on Zika virus, visit the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

This Q&A will tell you [what you need to know about Zika](#).

To see the CDC list of sites where Zika virus is active and may pose a threat to pregnant women, click [here](#).

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Citation: CDC updates spending plans to combat Zika (2016, October 18) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-10-cdc-combat-zika.html>

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