

Community Health Charities, CDC Foundation and March of Dimes unite to fight Zika Virus

New Zika Response fund launched to protect America's health and security.

Washington, DC (October 25, 2016) – Community Health Charities is rallying business leaders to engage their employees, customers and the public to prevent the spread of Zika virus as well as provide educational and medical resources, as well as support for affected individuals and families, especially pregnant women and their babies.

“Zika is not going away. Much more needs to be done to protect women and their babies from the devastating birth defects caused by the Zika virus, said Dr. Edward McCabe, Chief Medical Officer, March of Dimes. “In the coming years, a sustained commitment will be critical to control the spread of Zika by mosquito elimination, public health education, testing, and vaccine development, and more; and to provide services for affected children and families. The March of Dimes is happy that Community Health Charities has created this special Zika Response Fund, and we encourage others to help provide the critical funding we need to protect our mothers and babies from the threat of Zika.”

Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*). A person infected with Zika virus can also pass it to his or her sex partners. Zika virus is spreading in three U.S. territories, and to date, all but one U.S. state has reported travel-associated cases of Zika. Local mosquito-borne spread of Zika virus has also been reported in South Florida.

If a pregnant woman is infected with Zika virus, she could pass the virus to her fetus, which can result in a birth defect called microcephaly and other severe brain defects. Because of this risk, the top priority during the Zika response is to prevent pregnant women from getting infected and protect babies from exposure to Zika virus.

That's why Community Health Charities created the Zika Response Fund, in partnership with the CDC Foundation and March of Dimes Foundation, which will raise support for urgent, flexible funding needed to rapidly fill gaps and meet quickly evolving needs where government funding may not be available or accessible in the necessary timeframe.

“We are grateful to Community Health Charities for uniting partners to support vital Zika response efforts,” said Judith A. Monroe, M.D., president and CEO of the CDC Foundation. “We can do so much more working together to help prevent Zika from affecting more babies.”

As Zika evolves and spreads, flexible funding is needed to help organizations like the CDC Foundation and March of Dimes Foundation act swiftly. Support will be used for a variety of urgent needs, such as:

- Building diagnostic capacities for children who may have been exposed to Zika. These capacities include ultrasound equipment, retinal cameras, hearing exam equipment.
- Building capacity and strengthening diagnostic capabilities around insect-resistance and developing innovative approaches to advance mosquito control.
- Providing a supply of Zika Prevention Kits to complete distribution in high-risk U.S. territories through year end.
- Education campaigns in both English and Spanish that inform the public on how to avoid becoming infected and what to do if they suspect infection.
- Developing guidelines and training programs for healthcare workers to care for those babies and families affected by Zika virus. Includes preparation and educational training activities to support families with Zika-affected babies in the Newborn Intensive Care Units around the country.
- Augment current research investigating the biology of pregnancy that may yield important information about not only this virus, but also about causes of preterm birth and other adverse birth outcomes.

“Everyone needs to get into the fight,” said Thomas Bognanno, president and CEO, Community Health Charities. “Businesses and their employees, the general public, charities and government all need to come together to stop the spread of Zika and protect women and children.”

Businesses can include the Zika Response Fund in their workplace campaign and promote to their employees and customers; the general public is also encouraged to support it: <http://corp.healthcharities.org/zika/>

About Community Health Charities

For more than 60 years, Community Health Charities has improved lives by promoting health and wellness by uniting caring donors in the workplace with the nation’s most trusted health charities. Community Health Charities is the largest workplace giving collaborative with a focus on health. Over the past five years alone, Community Health Charities has raised more than \$400 million to support nearly 2,000 charities in our network. To learn more, visit healthcharities.org or follow us on social media: @HealthCharities or [facebook.com/HealthCharities](https://www.facebook.com/HealthCharities).



About the CDC Foundation

The CDC Foundation advances the mission of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through philanthropy and public-private partnerships that protect the health, safety, and security of America and the world. Established by Congress more than two decades ago, the CDC Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization that has launched 800 programs and raised more than \$620 million through partnerships with philanthropies, corporations, organizations, and individuals. The CDC Foundation currently manages nearly 300 CDC-led programs in the United States and in 75 countries. For more information, please visit www.cdcfoundation.org.

About the March of Dimes Foundation

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. For more than 75 years, moms and babies have benefited from March of Dimes research, education, vaccines, and breakthroughs.

For the latest resources and health information, visit our websites marchofdimes.org and nacersano.org. To participate in our annual signature fundraising event, visit marchforbabies.org. If you have been affected by prematurity or birth defects, visit our shareyourstory.org community to find comfort and support. For detailed national, state and local perinatal statistics, visit persistats.org. You can also find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).