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Midwest man tests positive for Zika virus while working in Alaska

There is no risk of local mosquitoes infecting Alaskans

ANCHORAGE – The Alaska Division of Public Health detected a case of Zika virus infection in an adult man who contracted the illness while visiting Central America earlier this month. The man is not an Alaska resident, but was visiting Alaska for work when he was evaluated for the illness at a clinic in Southeast Alaska.

His symptoms included a full-body rash, fever, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).

The State Public Health Laboratory detected Zika virus RNA in a blood specimen collected on July 18 while the patient was ill. The patient was not hospitalized and is now back home in the Midwest.

“This case is not a concern in terms of the virus spreading through Alaska mosquitoes, but it does reinforce the importance of knowing preventative measures,” said Dr. Jay Butler, Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health. “The two-fold foundation for preventing Zika infection is avoiding mosquitoes and using repellants when traveling to areas where Zika is transmitted, and protecting yourself during sex by either abstaining when a partner is possibly infected with Zika, or by consistently and correctly using condoms.”

Alaska mosquitoes are not capable of transmitting Zika virus, so there is no risk of local mosquito-borne transmission. Find more information about the Zika virus at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/Zika.aspx>.