

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Bell County Public Health District Zika Response

Bell County Public Health District will be conducting routine mosquito surveillance in Bell County Communities this Thursday July 21, 2016. The surveillance is a way to identify mosquito populations that are capable of transmitting diseases like Chikungunya, Dengue, West Nile and Zika Virus. It is also how Bell County Health Officials sample local mosquito populations to determine the likelihood of disease among area mosquitoes. Results help the Bell County Public Health District make public health recommendations to area healthcare providers and assist in determining what public health messages or actions are needed for area families.

Bell County Public Health District has a plan to protect the public health in Bell County from mosquito borne diseases like the Zika virus. The plan is aligned with the State of Texas plan and Center for Disease Control and Prevention's phased approach, which contains three specific sections. Phase I identifies mainly preventive strategies and activities that Bell County Public Health District will implement prior to any local transmission of Zika virus by local mosquitoes. When evidence suggest as it does now that mosquito borne diseases such as Zika are not present in our mosquito populations, Bell County Public Health District will focus on routine preventive strategies such as: public health education, mosquito bite prevention, mosquito habitat prevention, and mosquito surveillance activities. This Phase also includes our response to travel associated cases of Zika Virus. Travelers go abroad to Zika hot zones outside of the U.S. and return with the zika virus. Those who are symptomatic are counseled how to best protect those around them and how to limit mosquitos in and around their home. Phase II identifies activities that Bell County Public Health District will implement once a potential or confirmed case of local mosquito transmission has been confirmed (there have been no local transmissions in Bell County or elsewhere in the continental United States). It is important for Bell County residents to know and understand these are cases which are obtained locally through non-travel associated means, directly from a local mosquito. During Phase II Bell County Public Health District will use more aggressive sampling, more specific communication to the public about area cases, targeted education, and counseling for pregnant women and facilitate other preventive measures. Phase III identifies activities that Bell County Public Health District will implement once sustained local mosquito transmission has been confirmed.

If you see us in your Bell County communities preparing mosquito traps, please do not be alarmed as we are conducting routine mosquito surveillance for your benefit. If your family or friends discover a mosquito trap placed by Bell County Officials in your community, please help us by leaving it undisturbed. To learn more about mosquito borne diseases including Zika virus go to [Texaszika.org](http://Texaszika.org)

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