

# PUBLIC HEALTH

## PREPAREDNESS UPDATE



### February 2017

Volume 13, Issue 1

Zachary Thompson, Director

[www.dallascounty.org/hhs](http://www.dallascounty.org/hhs)

#### PAGE 2

**Health Authority Leads Internal Zika Workshop: All Hands on Deck**

**DCHHS Passes the Torch: North Texas BioWatch Advisory Committee Vice-Chair Finishes Term**

#### PAGE 3

**PHAC Meets to Discuss West Nile, Zika and Legislative Updates**

**DCHHS Visits Texas State Capitol**

#### PAGE 4

**National African American MSM Leadership Conference**

**Retirement Announcements: 41 Years of Combined Service**

## DCHHS holds webinar for Zika response partners featuring hypothetical scenarios



Left to right: Entomology Vector Control Program Manager Scott Sawlis, Public Health Preparedness Manager Emily Gore, Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins, Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Tammara Scroggins, DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson, Public Information Officer Renae Crutchfield, Entomologist Aubrey Paolino, and Assistant Director Environmental Health Rudy Phillips.

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is putting Zika response planning at the forefront of public health preparedness.

DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson and Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins have focused Zika response efforts on the CDC Zika Interim Response Plan for guidance on preparing for a locally acquired case.

On Jan. 12, 2017, DCHHS hosted a webinar open to the public to continue the conversation with Dallas County municipalities, emergency managers, local hospitals, and other response partners.

Presenting the latest clinical

update, Dr. Perkins began the webinar by discussing the history of Zika, Zika in Texas and imported Zika cases in Dallas County.

Entomologist Aubrey Paolino presented the second portion of the webinar, by providing an update on mosquito surveillance data.

Following Paolino, Dr. Perkins concluded the webinar by providing an example of a hypothetical scenario, aiming to educate stakeholders in understanding the scope and surveillance of a localized Zika Case.

"In the event of a locally acquired case, DCHHS expects to begin canvassing a half mile radius or more from the area of concern over a period of

45 days," said Dallas County Health Authority/ Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins.

"Canvassing includes boots on the ground teams such as vector control, who will provide technical expertise of vector control strategies, epidemiology, who will identify cases, and public health preparedness to aid information sharing."

In coordination with these groups, teams and individuals that may not be on the ground will still play a critical role in a locally acquired case response.

The DCHHS laboratory will support efforts in testing urine or blood samples, public health preparedness will initiate an emergency call center to answer questions, and the public infor-

mation officer, along with the CDC, will oversee media communications, press conferences, and will monitor local news stories/social media campaigns to keep the public informed.

"Depending on the scale of local transmission, DCHHS will be taking an all hands on deck approach by pulling in other DCHHS health staff to aid in the response," said DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson.

"Outside of DCHHS groups, planning for a locally acquired case will also be escalated to a unified coordination amongst DCHHS, Dallas County municipalities, Texas Department of State Health Services, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and CDC recommended agencies."

During the webinar, participants were tested (poll) on their knowledge of CDC guidance in an effort for DCHHS to measure if the webinar had a positive impact on information sharing.

In a pre-poll survey, 72 percent of respondents correctly answered guidance questions prepared from the CDC Interim Response Plan. Following the webinar, a post survey showed that the correct response rate increased from 72 to 79 percent.

Analyzing a slight increase in these numbers, DCHHS will utilize this information and adjust messaging for the next webinar set to be held Feb. 23, 2017.

## Dallas County Health Authority leads internal Zika workshop: All hands on deck

Prior to initiating the DCHHS Zika webinar for municipalities, Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins held monthly meetings with divisions to ensure the 2017 DCHHS Zika Response Plan and Zika Response Guide for locally acquired cases reflect CDC guidance.

The meetings are set to serve as a collaborative effort between Epidemiology, Vector Control, Laboratory Diagnostics, and Public Health Preparedness.

Through these monthly meetings, division leaders narrate and interpret CDC guidance.

In partnership, Assistant Director of Public Health Communicable Disease and Head Nurse Tammara Scroggins created a separate workshop expanding guidance from these meetings, to all DCHHS health managers.

Scroggins collaborated with Public Health Manager Emily Gore to organize the workshop to communicate and expand the internal operations plan on a broader scale.

One of many key factors in planning is to consider the scope and scale of response. In the event of a localized case, assistance may be needed from other divisions.

Leading the workshop, Dr. Per-

kins presented an overview of the Zika Response Plan explaining current needs that should be met.

Vector Control Operations Supervisor Spencer Lockwood shared best practices of canvassing efforts, Epidemiologist Sonya Hughes presented surveillance and investigation strategies, LRN Microbiologist Dominique Eades shared lab processes and testing needs, and Public Health Manager Emily Gore provided a synopsis of what community canvassing would entail during the event of a locally transmitted case.

"The goal of the workshop is to communicate needs and capabilities amongst each division," said Tammara Scroggins, asst. director of public health communicable disease.

"This group will continue to meet to discuss challenges and opportunities presented to identify operational processes as it relates to a localized case."

Under the direction of DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson and Dallas County Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins, the all hands on deck approach has been established by division leaders to ensure a unified front is set when a locally acquired case occurs.

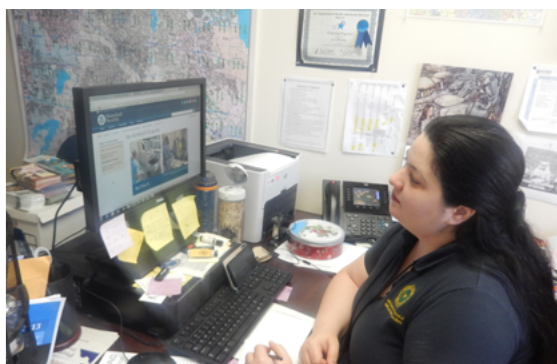


Dallas County Health Authority/DCHHS Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins providing the latest Zika Clinical Update.



DCHHS staff being briefed on latest Zika Clinical Update

## DCHHS passes the torch: North Texas BioWatch Advisory Committee Vice-Chair finishes term leading final biohazard exercise



Dr. Julie Martellini, Epidemiology Program Planner and North Texas Bio Watch Vice Chair.

Protecting residents from biohazard threats, North Texas BioWatch Advisory Committee (BAC) detects terrorist attacks on municipalities.

Last quarter, North Texas BAC Vice Chair, Dr. Julie Martellini lead DCHHS health staff and public health preparedness in a BioWatch exercise to detect the release of pathogens into the atmosphere.

During this exercise, Dr. Martellini also worked with the City of Dallas Fire Department to train for biohazard detection and response.

"These exercises are not only perfect opportunities for local stakeholders to communicate and practice a coordinated response; but, are also occasions for all levels of government to collaborate in order to enable the most rapid bio defense response," said Dr. Julie Martellini.

Serving in the voluntary role as the North Texas BAC Vice Chair, Dr. Martellini decided to accept the position in support of her primary role as the DCHHS Epidemiology Program Planner.

Dr. Martellini has served two years as Vice Chair and will soon transition from her role allowing another member to serve North Texas.

After Dr. Martellini led her final BioWatch exercise last quarter, Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins recommended recognition of Dr. Martellini's service.

"Proudly passing the torch after a two year term, DCHHS congratulates Dr. Martellini for her success representing not only DCHHS, however the entire North Texas area," said Dr. Perkins.



## PHAC meets to discuss West Nile, Zika and legislative updates

On Jan. 19, 2017, DCHHS held the first Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) meeting of the year.

Lead by PHAC Chair Commissioner John Wiley Price, DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson and Epidemiologist Sonya Hughes, the meeting focused on West Nile and Zika Virus updates in Dallas County.

Dallas County has identified 2016 as one of the busiest mosquito's seasons to date; however Hughes confirmed West Nile infection rates were still drastically lower compared to

the 2012 mosquito season.

DCHHS is actively taking steps to continue to educate and protect the public for this upcoming mosquito season. Not only will Dallas County be challenged with West Nile Virus, Zika Virus still remains a threat during mosquito season.

Hughes provided a detailed background of Zika, expressing that in 2016 more than 21 percent of cases in Dallas County were imported from Mexico.

While this area is of concern, DCHHS has also begun to focus efforts on a potential lo-

cally acquired case.

"Responding to local Zika transmission may entail increased workload responsibilities," said Sonya Hughes, epidemiologist.

"Depending on the area, housing density in a one mile diameter could lead us to canvass 1,000 or more homes."

On Jan. 12, 2017, DCHHS held a webinar for response partners, providing an overview of the CDC Interim Response Plan. During the PHAC meeting, committee members requested an extension of this

discussion to provide additional details in response planning.

Prior to the next PHAC meeting set for April. 20, 2017, DCHHS will be hosting a second webinar prompting cities to discuss Zika response planning in detail. The webinar will provide response partners an opportunity to discuss the needs and capabilities within each jurisdiction in addition to DCHHS response planning overall.



Dallas County Health Authority/DCHHS Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins, Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Tammara Scroggins, Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price, Epidemiologist Sonya Hughes and DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson.



PHAC members discussing legislative updates.

## DCHHS visits Texas State Capitol opening day of Texas legislature



Director Zachary Thompson, Dr. Colette Pierce Bumette, President and CEO, Huston-Tillotson University and Director Shannon Jones, III, Austin Public Health on opening day of the Texas Legislature at the Texas State Capital.



DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson and Dallas County Housing Asst. Director Thomas Lewis visiting Texas State Representative Yvonne Davis.



# PREPAREDNESS UPDATE

February 2017 | Dallas County Health and Human Services | [www.dallascounty.org/hhs](http://www.dallascounty.org/hhs)

## National African American MSM Leadership Conference:

*HIV, AIDS and other health disparities.*



DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson, Executive Director, NAASM, Darwin Thompson, DSHS Shelley Lucas, and President/CEO Abounding Prosperity Kirk Myers.

Director Zachary Thompson gave a welcome at the 2017 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV, AIDS and Other Health Disparities.

The purpose of this conference is to increase participants' knowledge of public health challenges, related solutions, trends, emerging issues and evidence gaps in health equity.

## Evelyn Johnson retires after 29 years of service

Evelyn Johnson has decided to leave DCHHS in order to pursue a new calling into retirement.

Evelyn has spent 29 years and six months servicing Dallas County residents. She retired from her position as Clerk IV (Fraud Clerk) with Dallas County Housing.



## Congratulations to Paul Spangenberger on retirement after 12 years

DCHHS gives a warm retirement farewell to Paul Spangenberger. Paul served as a dedicated Disease Intervention Specialist II for 12 years and one month.



Public Health Preparedness Division  
2377 North Stemmons Freeway  
Dallas, TX 75207  
214-819-2000

[www.dallascounty.org/hhs](http://www.dallascounty.org/hhs)

Zachary Thompson, Director

Dr. Christopher Perkins, Medical Director/Health Authority

### About This Newsletter

Public Health Preparedness Update is published monthly by Dallas County Health & Human Services. For information about this newsletter, contact DCHHS Public Information Officer Renae Crutchfield at 214-819-6329 or [renae.crutchfield@dallascounty.org](mailto:renae.crutchfield@dallascounty.org)

Sign up for e-mail and text updates or follow us on social media @DCHHS

