

# PUBLIC HEALTH

## PREPAREDNESS UPDATE


**July 2017**

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 Zachary Thompson, Director  
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## Washington releases Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response Planning Bill



Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Microbiologist Chad Donelson

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) Director Zachary Thompson teamed up with public health experts across the nation to discuss the ongoing state of the Zika virus outbreak and how com-

batting Zika virus could be undermined as federal funding wanes. Thompson was joined by the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the March of Dimes to host a webinar for media partners addressing the role of local health departments in fighting the disease with Public Health Emergency Preparedness funding.

Public Health Emergency funding aids local health departments to effectively respond to a range of public health threats, including infectious diseases, natural disasters, biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events.

The webinar took place after current administration proposed a 109 million dollar budget cut from the emergency preparedness fund, which directly impacts local health department's response in emergency situa-

tions.

"Any cuts to public health preparedness are unacceptable and we hope that this will be revisited by Congress," said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS director. "All public health is on a national level, however, you will see that the response is local. To have any cuts will have a dire impact on local health departments in terms of staffing and response."

Recently, July 12 the Federal Appropriations Committee in Washington released the Fiscal Year 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Funding Bill.

The bill introduces a different change through the CDC's Public Health Preparedness and Response budgeting. CDC related proposed changes include – \$198 million below the fiscal year 2017, however now includes an increase of \$45 mil-

lion in Public Health Preparedness and Response programs.

Federal funding through the CDC directly impacts DCHHS Zika response. The majority of DCHHS emergency response staff is funded through public health preparedness. This includes the DCHHS Laboratory, Epidemiology (disease detectives), Environmental Health/Vector Control and the overall local health department infrastructure.

DCHHS currently uses sustained funding for day to day tasks, however the emergency funding affects local preparation and response to disease outbreaks, including a potential locally transmitted case of Zika. In the state of an emergency, these funds are critical to protecting the health of citizens in Dallas County through disease prevention and intervention.

## Dallas County Commissioners updated

DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson, Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins and Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Tammara Scroggins gave a West Nile and Zika virus update to the Dallas County Commissioners Court July 5.



DCHHS leadership with Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia and Commissioner John Wiley Price.

## Zika Canvassing Exercise



Dr. Julie Martellini provides a Zika overview and just in time training to Dallas County MRC Volunteers and DCHHS staff members.

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) made local headlines after sending out a press release regarding the first boots on the ground Zika Canvassing exercise in Dallas County.

DCHHS and the City of Grand Prairie partnered with the Dallas County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to canvass Grand Prairie neighborhoods in preparation of responding to a locally acquired Zika case.

DCHHS staff, City of Grand Prairie and MRC volunteers placed boots on the ground, knocking on the doors of several Grand Prairie homes to assess DCHHS response planning procedures.

Together, nearly 50 staff members and volunteers walked door-to-door through Grand Prairie neighborhoods reaching

out to residents. Canvassing teams advised residents of the potential Zika threat; completed preliminary surveys and distributed informative Zika document packages to those who made contact with staff and volunteers.

DCHHS expects to handle public education and the clinical piece of the response in any scenario. Canvassing focuses on public health preparedness, laboratory and epidemiology capabilities.

In the event of locally acquired scenario, DCHHS will partner with the impacted municipalities on environmental health response, education, mosquito spraying and surveillance.

## Mosquitoes testing positive for West Nile in 46 zip codes



Left to right: Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Tammara Scroggins, Dallas County Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins, DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson, Entomology Vector Control Program Manager Scott Sawlis and Asst. Director Environmental Health Rudy Phillips.

DCHHS is closely monitoring West Nile activity throughout the county. So far, West Nile is present in more than 46 zip codes county wide.

Recent data indicates that DCHHS is seeing a slight decrease in positive mosquito traps throughout municipalities. This year, recent laboratory results are showing 109 mosquito traps returning positive with West Nile.

The 2016 mosquito season shows the highest positive trap record in Dallas County. Data reports show that by July 1, 2016, DCHHS reported a total of 150

traps. Although positive traps are lower than predicted, DCHHS is familiar with sudden spikes in epidemiologic curves.

July introduces the greatest risk of mosquito-borne disease transmission as temperatures continue to rise. DCHHS expects mosquito activity to heighten very quickly within the next month. Residents with concerns should contact mosquito abatement teams to place any ground spraying requests online at [www.dallas.leadteamapps.com/PublicMap/](http://www.dallas.leadteamapps.com/PublicMap/)

### Mosquito prevention continues with at risk populations



DCHHS Director met with James Garcia from the Crossing Church and provided mosquito repellent to the organization to distribute to the Dallas homeless.



Public Health Educator Marisa Gonzales and Director Zachary Thompson gave a West Nile presentation to the DCHHS Older Adults Services Program at Sunshine/Pleasant Grove.



## Beat the heat as summer temperatures rise



Left to right: City of Dallas Kathy Miller, City of Dallas Bill Clayton, Chief of Staff for Dallas County Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia Dallas Mayor Pro Tem Monica R. Alonzo, Reliant Vice President of Customer Care William Clayton and DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson.

Director Zachary Thompson participated in a press conference announcing the opening of Reliant “Beat the Heat” Centers in the City of Dallas at the West Dallas Multipurpose Center.

This is the second Dallas location following the Martin Luther King Jr Community Center.

Reliant Beat the Heat Center’s are free and open to the entire community. The facilities feature air-conditioned space, free bottled water, light snacks and entertainment for residents looking to cool off.

Residents should be mindful of the potential health risks that can result

from an increase in temperatures.

To date, DCHHS is reporting more than 43 heat-related illnesses in Dallas County.

Heat-related illnesses can cause heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and even death.

People 18 to 50 years old are most affected by heat-related illnesses in Dallas County. During sweltering temperatures and potentially unsafe conditions, DCHHS would like to remind residents to practice heat safety and to remember heat-related illnesses are preventable.

## Dallas County Housing Agency hosts “A Father’s Love” program

Dallas County Housing Agency kicked off its annual Father’s Day event this past month.

Tagged as “A Father’s Love”, the 7th annual event served as a supportive function to encourage and celebrate fathers in connection to families involved in the county’s Section 8 Housing Program.

The program is similar to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Annual father’s day appreciation initiative.

The event provides men with the opportunity to connect with resources including job train-

ing, health screenings, and education opportunities in addition to promoting regular engagement with their children.

“DCHHS recognizes the importance of children having many opportunities to learn from male role models,” said Thomas Lewis, DCHHS Asst. director of housing.

“Actively connecting fathers to public services can dramatically improve their quality of life. It is important to us that these fathers have the opportunity to provide and guide their families to live healthy and fulfilling lifestyles.”

## Dallas County Housing Agency Father’s Day 2017

### A Father’s Love



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## Award of excellence



After leading, training, and participating in the HHS Alpha and Closed Point of Distribution Medical Countermeasure exercise, Public Health Preparedness' Emily Gore's team received the 2017 HHS Regional

Directors Award of Excellence. The award recognizes employees who have made significant contributions to the mission of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of the Regional Director.

Left to Right: DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Tammara Scroggins, SNS Coordinator Renee Owusu-Ansah and Senior Planner Richard Esparza.



Messeret Abebe and Simon Adom have been dedicated employees of DCHHS for over 15 years. Messeret, retired from her position Senior Secretary/Health Administration to DCHHS Medical Director/ Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins. After 15 years and nine months, Messeret has decided to embark upon a new and promising journey in life.

Following Messeret, Simon has served Dallas County for 15 years and eight months retiring from his role as Building Inspector for Section 8 Housing. DCHHS is pleased to have work with Simon and wishes both him and Messeret a congratulations on retirement.



**DCHHS**  
Safe families, healthy lives.

Dallas County Health and Human Services



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### 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)

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