

INTERNAL STAFF UPDATE*

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

*****ATTACHED:** Information regarding the **Zika Virus**, including DHEC's role, mosquito control, and next steps for the Task Force.

Tomorrow – Expected Debate on the Floor:

Superintendent of Education Bill – Tomorrow, the House plans to take up the bill to appoint the Superintendent of Education, H.3041. Superintendent Spearman is providing a letter of support to drop on the desks of the members.

Today – Committee Actions:

Director Smith's Appointment – Today, Senate Judiciary voted unanimously 20-0 to give Director Smith a favorable report. Chairman Martin mentioned that the Senate will likely go into executive session to confirm his appointment next week. A dozen supporters (uniformed Troopers, Director Smith's wife, and others, including Lonnie Randolph from the NAACP) were on hand as well. The following Senators spoke in support of Director Smith:

1. Chairman Martin – Complimented his character in how he, his Troopers, and Honor Guard handled the Confederate Flag events last summer.
2. Senator Malloy – Complimented his breadth of knowledge of the agency and called him an inspiring leader and a "Trooper's Trooper."
3. Senator Hembree – Thanked him for his efforts with Bike Week.
4. Senator Hutto – Thanked him for the attention he pays to fallen Troopers.
5. Senator Johnson – Praised him in that he has never heard any complaints from DPS.
6. Senator Allen – Praised his professionalism, integrity, and involvement on community issues, such as serving on the Domestic Violence Task Force.
7. Senator Sabb – Told him he made the State proud.
8. Note: Senators Thurmond and Corbin took their time to ask lines of questioning on comp time and annual leave (Thurmond) and immigration enforcement (Corbin).

DV Fatality Review Bill (H.4666, Pope) – Today, House Judiciary gave favorable report 19-1 (Brannon against) this bill – we will reach out to him to discuss his concerns. Thanks goes to Representative Weeks for speaking on the bill and leading effort to table Rep. Brannon's motion to adjourn debate.

Motor Vehicle Dealer Closing Fees bill, H. 4548 (Sandifer) – Today, House LCI passed this bill unanimously.

AT&T / Telecom Bill – Today, House LCI passed out this bill that includes the stand alone language that we support, H.4679 (Forrester).

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DOT in Senate Finance – Today, Senate Finance met for four hours. Chairman Mike Wooten testified regarding governance of the agency. Director Hall and three members of her staff testified regarding revenues, project prioritization, expenditures, state maintenance, County Transportation Committees, and system conditions. Tomorrow, SIB Chairman Vince Graham will appear before Finance, and DOT staff has been asked to attend again.

Dorchester County Coroner:

Yesterday, we received the resignation letter from suspended Dorchester County Coroner Christopher Nesbit. Recall that the Governor suspended Nesbit on October 1, 2015 upon his indictment of Misconduct in Office. Due to the resignation, a vacancy now exists for which the Governor shall fill by appointment to serve until the November election. We are continuing to receive letters of recommendation, including one to come from Chief Keel, and will meet with the Governor this week or next to select an appointee. Until then, the deputy coroner serves as coroner.

Megan Avery:

Megan is now player #9 on the JV Soccer team for Brookland-Cayce High School! Her mother, Sonya, wanted to thank the Governor again for her time and support and sent the following pictures of Megan in her new soccer jersey.



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HAL!

DHEC – Zika Virus

Overview:

- As of Feb. 9, 2016, there are **no confirmed cases** of Zika virus in South Carolina.
 - DHEC coordinates testing of the virus for South Carolina and has submitted eight blood samples for testing to CDC. Three samples already have been ruled out for the virus and five samples are still pending results. All samples have been from people who have recently traveled abroad.
 - Beginning Feb. 10, DHEC will have in-house ability to test for Zika virus, with confirmatory results available within 48 hours. Currently, confirmatory results from CDC take one to three weeks from date of shipment.
- **In the U.S., there have been no locally acquired cases of Zika virus** from mosquitoes.
 - There have been 35 confirmed cases associated with individuals who have traveled internationally to areas where the virus is present.

Background:

- Zika is a virus that is most commonly spread to people through mosquito bites.
 - 80 percent of people infected will be asymptomatic. When symptoms do present, they are usually mild (e.g., fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes) and last for less than a week.
 - There is concern about the risk to infants born to women who are infected during pregnancy as recent evidence suggests a possible association between maternal infection and adverse fetal outcomes such as **congenital microcephaly**.
 - Currently, no medication or vaccine exists to prevent or treat the virus.
 - Sexual transmission of Zika virus is possible, and is of particular concern during pregnancy. Current information about possible sexual transmission of Zika is based on reports of three cases which are still being investigated by the CDC.
- The most likely carrier of the Zika virus, **the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito**, is found only in small numbers and **only in Charleston County**. However, one species, the *Aedes albopictus* mosquito, is abundant in South Carolina and is a potential carrier.
- The best way to protect against Zika and all other mosquito-borne illnesses is by preventing mosquito bites.
 - CDC and DHEC advise travelers to check advisories for their destinations and take necessary precautions to prevent mosquito bites.
 - Pregnant women should consider postponing plans to travel to areas with active Zika transmission (e.g., the Caribbean, Latin America and South America).

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DHEC's Role:

DHEC works to **detect the presence of Zika** in South Carolina and is **providing information** and education to health care providers, local mosquito-control programs, and the general public. DHEC's public health staff seeks to detect Zika as early as possible in mosquito populations and in travelers who visited areas where the virus is active. Actions taken to date include:

- Sent four messages via our Health Alert Network to health care providers statewide since January 16. One targeting pediatricians, another for obstetricians, a general message about identifying and reporting Zika virus infections in travelers returning from affected countries, and another on Zika transmission through sexual contact.
- Participated in conference call with S.C. Hospital Association to discuss further targeted messages to health care providers.
- Held proactive media availability with a DHEC physician on Jan. 29 with more than 20 media outlets statewide. News stories were placed in major S.C. daily newspapers, television stations in all major metro markets.
- Developed a script and trained personnel to stand up a hotline and respond to questions from the public if a case is confirmed in South Carolina.

DHEC Follows CDC Guidelines:

DHEC follows CDC guidance and established best practices in conducting disease control and surveillance activities.

- **Per current CDC guidance, quarantine is not usually recommended for individuals with Zika virus** as the primary mode of transmission of the virus is through mosquitoes, not person-to-person.
- As with other mosquito-borne illnesses, if a confirmed Zika case is identified (locally or foreign acquired), an infected individual would be advised to limit their outdoor activities and exposure to mosquitoes for the first week of illness (when the virus could be active in their blood) to prevent the spread of the virus.
- On Feb. 5, CDC issued guidance to limit the risk of sexual transmission of the virus while it investigates three reported cases of this mode of transmission. Men who reside in or have traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission and who have a pregnant partner should abstain from sexual activity or consistently and correctly use condoms during sex for the duration of the pregnancy. Pregnant women should discuss their male partner's potential exposures to mosquitoes and history of Zika-like illness with their health care provider.

Mosquito Control:

- **Local government agencies are responsible for monitoring and controlling mosquito populations in their jurisdictions.**
- **DHEC is responsible for conducting surveillance of mosquito-borne diseases** in mosquitoes, birds, and horses. DHEC helps local governments' mosquito control programs trap mosquitoes and subsequently facilitates laboratory testing of the mosquitoes for viruses including Zika and West Nile.
- If the virus is identified in a population, local mosquito control programs are responsible for taking actions to treat the areas where the infected mosquitoes were trapped.
- Recent flooding in S.C. could lead to a greater mosquito population as warm weather returns. Species that use floodwater habitats can lay eggs on the sides of containers or in mud or damp soil. These eggs can lie dormant in dry conditions, awaiting more rain.
- DHEC's storm water program regulates runoff that can affect the quality of water reaching the state's rivers, streams and lakes (e.g., runoff from construction sites). The program does not address standing water in which mosquitoes often breed. Some local governments have their own storm water programs that have additional tools to address standing water.

Task Force and Next Steps:

- DHEC has convened a Zika Task Force, organized through the agency's Office of Public Health Preparedness, to plan and prepare across the agency to work with other state agencies, our community partners and health care providers.
- This group will provide overall coordination, offer technical assistance and help connect local governments and communities with necessary resources.
- This group will provide recommendations based on its discussions with partners.

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