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HEALTH AUTHORITY STATEMENT:

Travelers Advised to Protect Against, Avoid Spreading Zika Viruses

SHERMAN (March 3rd, 2016) – The Grayson County Health Department is advising travelers to be aware of an outbreak of Zika Virus in Central America, South America, Mexico, Including certain islands in the Caribbean, the South Pacific and Cape Verde. Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites. Rarely, the virus is spread from mother to child. Spread of the virus through blood transfusion and sexual contact has also been reported.

The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

In May 2015, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issued an alert regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infection in Brazil. The outbreak in Brazil led to reports of Guillain-Barre syndrome and pregnant women giving birth to babies with birth defects and poor pregnancy outcomes.

There is neither a vaccine nor prophylactic medications available to prevent Zika virus infection. The Center for Disease Control, recommends that all pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. According to the CDC Pregnant Women who travel to these areas should protect themselves from mosquito bites by using repellants, permethrin-coated clothing, long sleeves and pants, and by staying indoors (ideally in places with air conditioning) as much as is practical. . The CDC advises Pregnant Women to refrain from unprotected sexual contact if their male partner has traveled to or lives in areas where Zika virus is present, for the duration of their pregnancy.

To date no Zika infections resulting from a mosquito bite have been reported in The United States.

For additional information visit www.cdc.gov or <http://www.texaszika.org/>