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Blanquita B. Valenti
Freeholders



Shanti Narra
Chairperson,
Public Safety & Health

John A. Pulomena
County Administrator

Joseph W. Krisza
Department Head

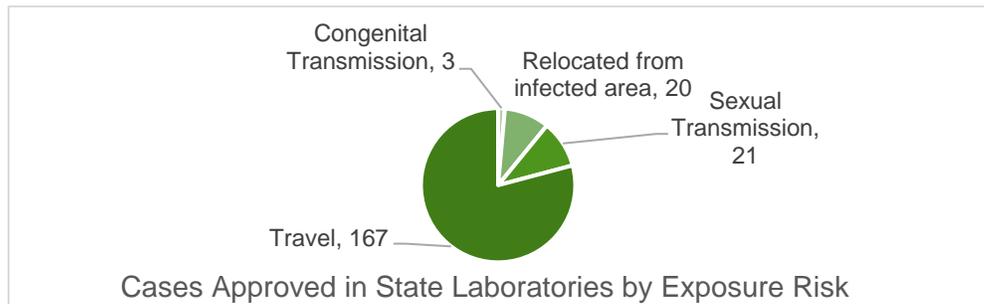
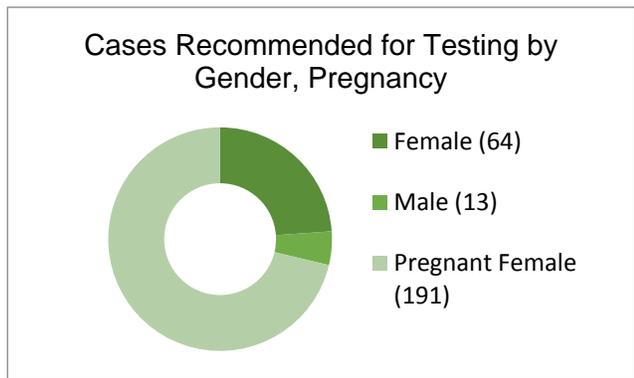
Lester Jones
Director – Health Officer

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY & HEALTH

Office of Health Services

The Middlesex County Office of Health Services has been, and will continue to be, active in the identification and diagnosis of our residents at risk for contracting the Zika virus. Zika is a viral infection spread by infected mosquitos, but can also be sexually transmitted and passed from a pregnant woman to her unborn child. So far in 2017, there have been 10 confirmed cases of Zika in New Jersey. While there have been no locally acquired cases via mosquito bites, many of our residents and their relatives travel to or are from Zika infected areas. These areas include Mexico, the Caribbean Islands, Central and South America, portions of Africa, and Southeast Asia. Brownsville, Texas is also currently listed as an area of caution, but Miami-Dade County, Florida was just recently removed from this list. When traveling to these areas, preventative measures should be taken to avoid mosquito bites. Additionally, protected sex or abstinence should be practiced if pregnant or intending to conceive if there has been recent travel to one of these areas by either party.

Zika testing is available for those with identified risk factors. Testing is available through state laboratories for those that meet the CDC’s criteria, or through commercial laboratories with a doctor’s approval. From June 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, 268 residents were recommended for testing, with 95% of them being female and almost 75% of those females were pregnant. Nearly 70% of those recommended for testing in state laboratories, or 187 residents, personally traveled to or moved from infected areas, with an additional 21 residents approved because of exposure through sexual transmission from a partner traveling to or moving from an infected area.

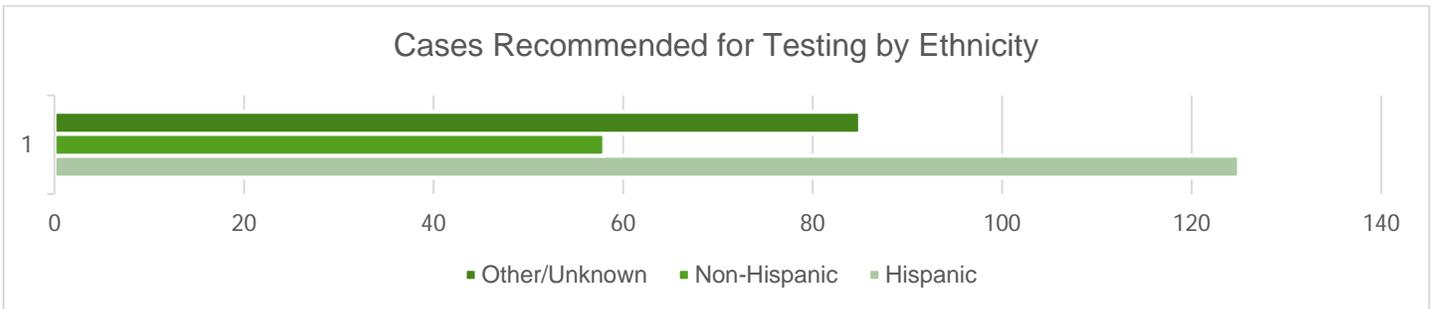
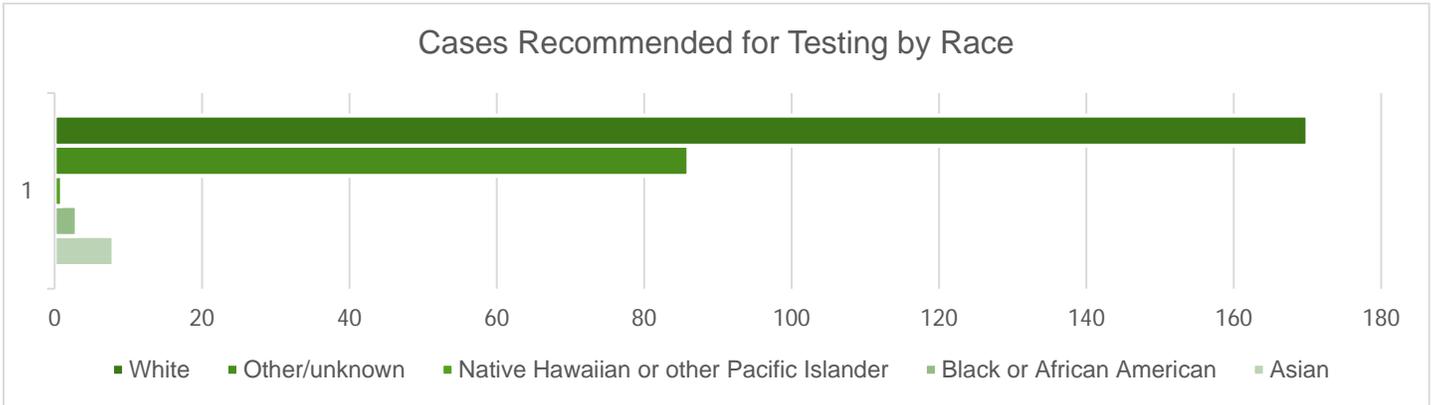


ZIKA CALL CENTER
1-800-962-1253

Call Center services are available 24/7 to answer questions from the general public and health care professionals.



White residents comprised more than 63% of those recommended for testing, and Hispanics accounted for more than 46% of the total recommended for testing.



Testing and surveillance of Zika is being conducted, but more importantly, we should be educating our residents about the disease and its risk factors. As stated above, most of those meeting the testing criteria resulted from residents voluntarily participating in risky activities. It is preferred that the risk is reduced whenever possible. The Middlesex County Office of Health Services is preparing educational boards with pertinent Zika information that will soon be displayed in libraries throughout the county, in both English and Spanish. Information can also be found by visiting our website at www.middlesexcountynj.gov and entering “Zika” in the search field. Please help us encourage residents to take a moment to review this information.

TOP 5 THINGS EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT ZIKA

1. Zika primarily spreads through infected mosquitoes. You can also get Zika through sex.
2. The best way to prevent Zika is to prevent mosquito bites.
3. Zika is linked to birth defects.
4. Pregnant women should not travel to areas with risk of Zika.
5. Returning travelers infected with Zika can spread the virus through mosquito bites.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office for more information regarding Zika, or any other health related concern.

