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### **Antigua and Barbuda records its first Zika Virus Case**

Antigua and Barbuda has recorded its first case of the vector-borne Zika Virus, following test results confirmed by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA).

The announcement was made by Minister of Health and the Environment, Molwyn Joseph, who said that the individual is a female resident from the Grays Farm area.

In making the announcement, Minister Joseph noted that the case in question did not originate on island but was rather imported from the Dominican Republic where the woman went to spend time in April.

“We wish to inform the public that we now have the first laboratory confirmed case of the Zika Virus infection which was reported to Antigua and Barbuda by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). The case is an adult female from the Grays Farm area with a recent travel history to the Dominican Republic”, Minister Joseph said.

Antigua and Barbuda now joins 35 countries in the Americas and four islands in the OECS with Laboratory confirmed cases of the Zika Virus.

In strengthening the point of the case being imported, Minister Joseph said that there is absolutely no evidence of the virus in the house of the individual, in the community where she resides or on the island on a whole.

“Investigations point to this being an imported case because relatives and house hold contacts of the infected individual have been symptom-free and to date, there has been no case evidence of local transmission of Zika in Antigua and Barbuda. The fact of the matter is that no member of the family who lives with this individual has come down with the virus but the family member who has the Zika was in an environment where there was a Zika case in the Dominican Republic so we are pretty sure that it was imported. We are not speculating, we are quite confident that it was imported”, Joseph continued.

Joseph also stressed the point that his Ministry will treat the issue as a matter of national priority and will not hesitate to inform the public on any developments regarding the Zika Virus.

He said the results from CARPHA were received today.

“We learned of it today and here we are having a press conference as a clear demonstration that we will be transparent and not keep the public in the dark and in addition to that, we want to get the corporation of the public to treat this issue as a matter of national health concern”, the Health Minister continued.

Also present at the press conference was Chief Medical Officer of Dr. Rhonda Sealey-Thomas and Chief Health Inspector, Lionel Michael.

Dr. Sealey-Thomas assured that Antigua and Barbuda has been doing a stellar job in fighting against the disease. She also said that the treatment for the disease varies and added that the infected individual has already been treated and recovered.

“We have been doing a great job with vector control; we have been successful so far in keeping the level of transmission to zero on the island so we have been doing what is necessary in controlling the Aedes Aegypti Mosquito. This person sought medical attention and has been treated for the symptoms and has recovered quite well with no complications”, Sealey-Thomas noted.

Michael on the other hand has continued to stress the need for proper vector control and boasted that his department has been carrying out a rigorous mosquito eradication program across the country, particularly in the city area.

He revealed that the Grays-Greene area has had scores of visits over the past months.

“For the first three months of the year, we have been to the Grays Farm/Grays Green community about 75 times, carrying out fogging activities and mass clean up campaigns in the whole area because it’s a big area and so we are satisfied that we are doing a lot of activities in that particular area and around Antigua and Barbuda so yes we have a very aggressive mosquito control program”, Michael said.