Zika in Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015-2016

Report Date: April 20th, 2016

Outbreak Overview
Outbreak came to the attention of RMI Ministry of Health in late January, with report of a traveler who was ill in November after a 3 week stay in Majuro and later testing in Australia. 34 met case definition since expanded surveillance for Zika begun Jan 29. Two new possible cases in past 25 days and none in past week. Out of the 34 suspect cases: 6 pregnant ladies, 1 pos PCR (index case), 1 neg PCR but positive IgM. 2 delivered (babies did not meet the microcephaly criteria). And 2 pregnant mothers are still waiting for IgM testing. There may or may not be ongoing low-level transmission of Zika virus on Majuro. One infant born with microcephaly to a woman with + Zika IgM test via US.

Case Definition:
Possible: Rash OR Fever AND any two: Pain behind eyes, conjunctivitis, body aches, edema of hands or feet.
Confirmed: Meets possible case definition plus positive lab test (Zika PCR, IgM or serial IgG) test.

Possible Cases (Zika not ruled out by labs) by Date of Onset

Cases by Age & Sex
Age Range: 1-66 years
Median age: 28 years
Female:Male ratio: 2:1

Lab Testing
Index Case: (11-22-15) Zika IgM+, IgG+ (Too late for PCR; Chik, Dengue IgG, IgM Neg).
Since Jan 29, 2016:
- PCR Testing: 1+, 22 Neg, 11 Pending
- IgM Testing: 10+, 14 Neg, 10 pending

Collection of mosquitoes in March to US DOD Lab in Japan for Zika and other arboviruses

Response Measures
Declaration of Health Emergency: by President Heine on Feb 29th → Health and Sanitation Teams established
Disease Surveillance: Expanded case finding since Jan 29th, 2016; and since for infant microcephaly and neuro damage
Outreach: Household visits in Majuro- screening for pregnant women and key messages completed. Flyers and screening of travelers to outer islands
Health Promotion: An interview with the entomologist about spraying for Zika aired on the government radio station. A mass text message was sent to residents throughout Majuro to alert residents about spraying. Principles and parents of students were notified about the school spraying. A press release about the risk to pregnant women was published in the newspaper.
Vector Control: Intensive Majuro clean-ups occur each Thursday and Friday. Spraying pregnant women’s houses and schools began in the most densely populated zone on 4/13/2016. Zika kits are being distributed to all the pregnant women during spraying.

Paying staff for overtime hours remains a barrier.

Gaps:
Barriers for a rapid response include the process of purchase orders and purchase requests. No changes have been made to this process. The President’s declaration has expired and needs renewal in order to continue the MALGOV and MAWC village clean-up.

Contact:
Dr Helentina Garstanga
EpiNet team chairperson:
455-4031
garstanga@gmail.com

EpiNet Outbreak Control Team Members: Paul Lalita, Josephine Matthew, Edlen Anzures, Dr Cho Cho Thein, Dr Tom Jack, Francyne Wase-Jacklick, Ransens Hansen Jr, Albert Ben, Aaron Lang (Mark Durand)

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