August 3, 2016

To: The University of Denver Community

The University of Denver Health and Counseling Center would like to remind students, faculty, and staff who may be traveling to and from affected areas of recent developments regarding Zika virus. Zika virus transmission and outbreaks continue to be active in Mexico, Central and South America, the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean, and Cape Verde. As of June 15 the Florida Department of Health has identified an area in one neighborhood of Miami where Zika is being spread by mosquitos.

Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause mild symptoms of fever, rash, joint pain or conjunctivitis lasting several days to a week. Unfortunately, Zika infection is linked to some birth defects, including microcephaly (small head size associated with developmental problems) and can be spread through blood or sexual contact.

For pregnant women or women planning to become pregnant the CDC recommends considering postponing travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. If you have a male partner who lives in or has traveled to an area where Zika transmission is ongoing, either abstain from sex for at least 6 months or use condoms consistently and correctly for the duration of your pregnancy. Currently the CDC has advised women living in Zika affected areas to delay pregnancy for up to 6 months after symptoms began and a man infected with Zika can spread the virus during sex with his female or male partners. To prevent spread to your partner use a condom correctly every time you have vaginal, anal, or oral sex or do not have sex for at least 6 months after your symptoms started.

There is no vaccine to prevent or specific medicine to treat Zika infections so symptoms should be treated with plenty of rest, fluids to prevent dehydration, and acetaminophen (Tylenol) to relieve fever and pain. See your healthcare provider if you develop more severe symptoms and have recently traveled to an area with active Zika transmission. Prevention is key to reducing the spread of this infection with protection of exposed skin and the use of EPA-registered insect repellents when traveling.