



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



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Director and State Health Officer

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

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Dear Colleagues,

As you know, in May 2015 Zika virus began circulating in the Western Hemisphere. On January 15, 2016, CDC released a Health Advisory announcing that Zika virus has been reported in travelers returning to the United States and advising public health professionals on how to recognize, manage and report cases. In addition, on January 13, CDC released a memo on “Updated diagnostic testing for Zika, chikungunya, and dengue viruses in US Public Health Laboratories”.

VRDL currently can perform Zika virus real-time RT-PCR on acute (<8 days post onset) serum specimens for surveillance only with plans to validate it for diagnostic testing. We also are actively working to develop serology diagnostic tests for Zika IgM (EIA and IFA). We can currently perform PRNT to measure Zika virus-specific neutralizing antibodies and discriminate among cross-reacting antibodies in primary flavivirus infections (dengue, WNV and SLE) for surveillance purposes. As you know, VRDL can perform diagnostic RT-PCR and serology (IgM & IgG by EIA or IFA) for dengue virus infection, as well as diagnostic RT-PCR and serology (IgM & IgG by IFA) for chikungunya (an alphavirus).

Additional surveillance assays include Western Blot for Chikungunya, WNV, SLE, and dengue (soon to include Zika), as well as PRNT to differentiate chikungunya from Western Equine Encephalitis virus infection.

If you request any of the VRDL tests listed above, it is critical to include symptom onset date and travel history in your test request.

We request that specimens are sent to CDC for Zika testing through VRDL; please use the general submittal form (https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/vrdl/Documents/VRDL_General_Human_Specimen_Submittal_Form_Lab300.pdf), indicating Zika testing is requested and include a copy of the CDC DASH from whenever possible. If the specimen is in short quantity, specimens may be submitted to CDC directly from your PHL; please notify Diana Singh (Diana.Singh@cdph.ca.gov) or Maria Salas (Maria.Salas@cdph.ca.gov) if you plan to do so to ensure that the CDC reports are forwarded to you.

Please feel free to contact us at 510-307-8585 if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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