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

KAREN L. SMITH, MD, MPH
Director and State Health Officer

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

March 4, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

As of March 4, 2016, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Viral and Rickettsial Diseases Laboratory (VRDL) will conduct diagnostic serology testing for Zika using an immunofluorescent antibody assay (IFA) in addition to the diagnostic real time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing. This serology test detects immunoglobulin M (IgM) in patient blood that is indicative of a recent infection. VRDL will perform serology testing for symptomatic individuals with indicated travel history and blood specimen collected on or after illness onset date. VRDL will also perform this serology test for asymptomatic pregnant women who have lived in an area with Zika virus transmission or who have traveled to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission and whose blood samples are collected between 2 and 12 weeks after return from travel. IgM testing is performed as an initial screening test. Because of cross reactivity among flaviviruses, a plaque reduction neutralization test (PRNT) is performed on flavivirus IgM positive specimens (currently performed at CDC). PRNT is able to detect virus specific neutralizing antibodies that can distinguish among flaviviruses in some cases. VRDL will report negative serology results upon completion of testing. If the IgM testing is positive, VRDL will forward the specimen to CDC for a confirmatory PRNT. VRDL will provide diagnostic serology for dengue and chikungunya virus infection as needed. As stated in a previous letter the overall laboratory interpretation of the submitted samples will depend upon all testing performed.

All specimens should be sent to VRDL with the VRDL General Purpose Specimen Submittal Form Lab 300 and must include all required information that was requested on the CDC DASH form (see http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/vrdl/Documents/Zika_Testing_VRDL_Quicksheet.pdf).

VRDL is continuing to validate a flavivirus PRNT and RT-PCR to detect Zika virus in urine. For symptomatic individuals, urine samples collected within 30 days of illness onset can be submitted along with the serum sample. VRDL will continue to forward urine samples for RT-PCR testing to CDC until validations are completed.

To review all of our testing guidance, please refer the updated "ZIKA LABORATORY TESTING GUIDANCE" attached or at VRDL website https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/vrdl/Pages/zikainfo.aspx

If you have any questions about specimen collection, submittal, shipping or result reporting, please contact the VRDL Medical and Epidemiology Liaison Section at (510) 307-8585 or email VRDL.Submittal@cdph.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Dongxiang Xia

Dongxiang Xia, MD, PhD, D(ABMM), SV(ASCP)
Chief / Director, Viral & Rickettsial Disease Laboratory
California Department of Public Health
E-mail: Dongxiang.Xia@cdph.ca.gov