

Sexually-transmitted Zika case confirmed in Texas

DALLAS (AP) — Health officials in Texas on Tuesday reported the first case of the Zika virus being transmitted within the United States amid the current outbreak in Latin America — a person who was infected through sex.

Dallas County health officials said the unidentified person had not traveled but had sex with a person who had returned from Venezuela and fallen ill with Zika, which has been linked to birth defects in the Americas. The virus is primarily spread through mosquito bites, but investigators had been exploring the possibility it could be sexually transmitted. There was a report of a Colorado researcher who picked up the virus in Africa and apparently spread it to his wife back home in 2008, and it was found in one man's semen in Tahiti.

"It's very rare, but this is not new," Zachary Thompson, director of the Dallas County Health and Human Services, told WFAA-TV in Dallas. "We always looked at the point that this could be transmitted sexually."

The CDC says it will issue guidance in the coming days on prevention of sexual transmission of Zika virus, focusing on the male sexual partners of women who are or may be pregnant. The CDC has already recommended pregnant women postpone trips to more than two dozen countries with Zika outbreaks, mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Venezuela. It also said other visitors should use insect repellent and take other precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

In the epidemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, the main villain identified so far is called *Aedes aegypti* — a species of mosquito that spreads other tropical diseases, including chikungunya and dengue fever. It is found in the southern United States, though no mosquito-borne transmission has been reported in the



A city worker fumigates a public school to combat the Aedes aegypti mosquito, known to transmit dengue, Chikungunya and Zika, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Tuesday. Honduras is now reporting 3649 confirmed cases of Zika infections and has also declared a state of national emergency.

AP Photo/Fernando Antonio

continental United States to date. There have been about 30 cases in the U.S. in the last year, all travelers who brought it into the country.

The World Health Organization on Monday declared a global emergency over the rapidly spreading Zika virus, saying it is an "extraordinary event" that poses a threat to the rest of the world. The declaration was made after an emergency meeting of independent experts called in response to a spike in babies born with brain defects and abnormally small heads in Brazil since the virus was first found there last year.

WHO officials say it could be six to nine months before science proves or disproves any connection between the virus and babies born with abnormally small heads.

The CDC said that in the recent Texas

case, there's no risk to a developing fetus. Zika was first identified in 1947 in Uganda. It wasn't believed to cause any serious effects until last year; about 80 percent of infected people never experience symptoms.

The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting several days to a week. Symptoms usually start two days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

While Thompson told the television station that the case of sexual transmission is "a game-changer," he added that he didn't want people in Dallas County to overreact. Health officials and Thompson noted that sexual partners can protect themselves by using condoms to prevent spreading sexually transmitted infections.

TOBACCO: 95 percent of smokers started before age 21

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one of the best things we can do to prevent the devastating effects that nicotine addiction, tobacco addiction has had continues to have on Oregonians."

Steiner Hayward, who works as a family physician, took the podium Tuesday at the coalition's "Tobacco 21 for Oregon" campaign launch to declare her commitment to the cause.

"The later that people have access to tobacco or other nicotine-containing products the more likely we are to prevent people from becoming addicted," Steiner Hayward said. "We also know that when 18-year-olds can buy tobacco they're in our high schools. We have lots of kids that are 18 and in high school, and they can give cigarettes to their friends."

National data indicates about 95 percent of smokers started using tobacco before age 21.

In Oregon, about 7,000 people die annually from tobacco-related diseases. Tobacco use is estimated to cost the state about \$3 billion per year in health care costs and lost productivity, according to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

Several students from South Salem High School

on Tuesday signed pledges to abstain from using tobacco and wrote to their lawmakers to urge them to raise the legal age for buying the drug.

"I think it'll make it a lot harder for kids to use it," said Davis Carter, an 18-year-old South Salem student. "It'll be a lot less accessible and stop it from getting into high schools as much."

Luis Rodriguez, Oregon government relations director for the Cancer Action Network of the American Cancer Society, said no legislation has been filed this year to raise the age limit.

Members of the coalition, which also include the American Heart Association and American Lung Association, plan to give testimony Tuesday to the Senate Health Care Committee about why the law should change.

"We are really looking at 2016 as a way to educate lawmakers and educate the public about why this is such an important issue," Rodriguez said. "Right now, we don't have a vehicle, but we are looking forward to the future when we will."

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

UMATILLA: Police chief will make \$88,224-\$102,924 per year

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personnel committee recommended hiring Pelleberg as the city manager, while also having him retain his current position as public works director. Public works operations manager Jason Barron would then be promoted to assistant public works supervisor and current finance director Melissa Ince would serve as deputy city manager.

In recognition of the additional responsibilities that the staffing changes will create for some employees, the city council adopted a new pay schedule on Tuesday for senior level staff.

The new pay schedule considered Tuesday night

represents a significant pay increase for experienced staff.

Under the former pay schedule, the police chief and public works superintendent's annual salary ranged from \$61,884 to \$81,468 per year. Under the new schedule, those positions will make \$88,224 to \$102,924 per year. Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston made \$105,560 in 2014-2015.

Salary for police lieutenant and assistant public works superintendent was raised from \$53,148-\$70,368 to \$72,132-\$86,616 annually.

Under the new schedule, the new position of deputy city manager will make between \$94,224 and

\$108,924 per year. The changes will take place in March.

The last time the city's pay schedule was reviewed was on March 4, 2014 when the city council voted to give all city staff a 3 percent cost of living pay raise.

At the end of Tuesday's meeting, the mayor and each city councilor expressed appreciation for Ward's service and leadership.

"We haven't always been on the same side of the fence, but we've always been able to talk and I appreciate that," councilor Mel Ray said.

During the public comment period, planning commission member Boyd Sharp said he believed

Umatilla was better off after Ward's service. He said before Ward's tenure he had been frustrated by his service on the budget committee and planning commission because it felt like questions were strongly discouraged and committees were expected to rubber stamp decisions, if they were consulted at all. During Ward's tenure, Sharp said, that changed.

"Your leadership and your openness for us to ask questions and to challenge you if we disagree has been outstanding," he said.

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PLUTE: Council unanimously approved pursuing emergency designation for the airport

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shot" backed by "cowards and a bully." Pendleton Citizens United must collect 705 signatures by April 25 to trigger a recall election. Plute beat incumbent Steve Taylor to win his at-large seat in 2010 and ran unopposed in 2014. His term runs through 2018.



Plute

In other council business, the council unanimously approved that city staff pursue Disaster Emergency Response and Support Center designation from the state for the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport.

Kishpaugh filed the petition Jan. 26, listing a recently resolved lawsuit against Plute and his support for the \$5 street utility fee as the reasons for the recall.

In response, Plute called the recall petition "a cheap

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PILOT ROCK: New clay liner in lagoon would cost additional \$1M

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that lagoon with protective lining.

The engineering firm Anderson Perry and Associates estimated the project would cost around \$4 million. Brad Baird, president of the firm, told the council that putting a new clay liner in the lagoon

would cost an additional \$1 million.

Baird also said the rejection is typical for this process and suggested a meeting with DEQ to dig into the basis for the denial. Baird said he would facilitate that, and support city officials at the meeting.

The council elected to discuss the rejection and

what it might mean at a work session Monday at 6 p.m. City officials also meet Wednesday with representatives of state and federal agencies, including the DEQ,

to go over funding scenarios for the lagoon project.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

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STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Tanner Smith
 HERMISTON HIGH SCHOOL

Tanner is a senior at Hermiston High School. A choir member extraordinaire, Tanner has been selected to Oregon's all-state choir and he is one of only three tenors to be tapped for the all-Northwest choir. Tanner traveled to Europe this past summer after being chosen to be a part of the Oregon Ambassadors. Tanner has a current GPA of 3.67.
 A fun fact: as an underclassman JV football player, Tanner scored the first regulation play touchdown in the new Bulldog stadium.

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Electrical Engineering Scholarship - a \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply by **March 1, 2016** at www.oregonstudentaid.gov

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UEC wants to help make college accessible to our young members. We hope you apply.

For more information about UEC's scholarship program, visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman or online at www.umatillaelectric.com. You can also call us for more information at 541-564-6414 or the Oregon Student Access and Completion (OSAC) at 1-800-452-8807.