

Floridians for Reproductive Freedom

Zika Response Talking Points

The state government of Florida has not taken the necessary measures to ensure the health and safety of our communities in responding to the Zika virus outbreak.

Florida has the highest number of residents infected of any state in the country, making Florida the battleground for this virus.

Because there is no medication or vaccine for the Zika virus, the best strategy to combat Zika is prevention. But the State's prevention focus must expand beyond mosquito control.

Sexual Health Education and Contraception

- As Zika can be transmitted sexually, increased access to sexual health education and contraceptives must be prioritized. The CDC states, “Effective contraception to prevent pregnancy in women and their partners who want to delay or prevent pregnancy is a key prevention strategy for Zika.” (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/intheus/florida-update.html>)
- Women and their partners who do not want to get pregnant now should be advised about the range of effective birth control methods and counseled on the importance of correct and consistent use of these methods.
- Florida's leadership has not taken any meaningful steps towards educating the public about their sexual health.

Abortion Access

- Women who contract Zika while pregnant must be granted compassion, support, and medical options, including access to safe, legal abortion care. This is in contrast to Gov. Scott's approach which includes signing into law several drastic anti-abortion measures that put up barriers to abortion access.

Medicaid Expansion

- The Zika virus outbreak is a clear example of why the State must work to ensure that more Floridians have health insurance coverage. Without Medicaid expansion, too many people will be left vulnerable and the public health crisis will grow unchecked.
- Gov. Scott has repeatedly rejected expansion of the state Medicaid program, which would provide access to quality, affordable health coverage for nearly 600,000

Floridians. Even worse, by refusing to expand Medicaid more than \$50 billion in Florida taxpayer dollars have been left on the table – money that Florida needs for this latest health crisis.

- The same leader who refuses federal dollars for general health coverage, eagerly has his begging hand out asking for federal dollars for Zika. Gov. Scott's cognitive dissonance and political reindeer games come at the expense of Floridians' health.

Planned Parenthood

- Governor Scott worked with the Legislature to attempt to defund Planned Parenthood. Undeterred by such antics, Planned Parenthood continues its mission of providing free and low cost testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and access to birth control. Planned Parenthood has already played an instrumental role in combating Zika in South Florida. The State of Florida would do well to see Planned Parenthood as a primary, strong partner in Zika prevention and treatment.

Children Born with Zika-Induced Microcephaly

- As the number of babies born with microcephaly increases, it is essential that the burden to respond to this epidemic not be placed exclusively on women's shoulders.
- Low-income women are particularly at risk for Zika infection due to their lack of access to quality health care or affordable mosquito repellents and are therefore at higher risk for giving birth to a baby with microcephaly.
- In the circumstance where a woman has given birth to a child with microcephaly the state must ensure that families have the support, resources, and services necessary to raise a child with a disability.

Public Health Coordination

- Local health departments and other public health entities must coordinate with each other well – in a systematic, transparent matter, just as they should in any public health emergency -- to effectively promote available resources and coordinate preventive care efforts.
- Governor Scott must earmark a portion of any federal funds to expand resources for family planning education and services.