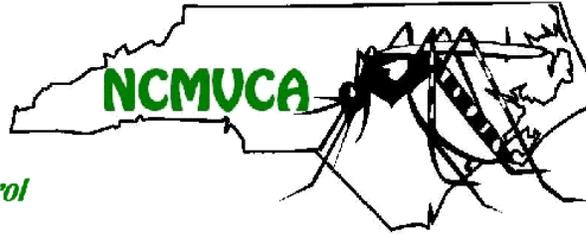


*North Carolina
Mosquito & Vector Control
Association*



February 19, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Raleigh, NC— The emergence of the Zika virus as a global threat to public health has reminded us of the central role of mosquito control in preventing disease. With no vaccine currently approved, the best approach to controlling Zika and other mosquito-transmitted viruses is through the persistent control of the potential vectors. The North Carolina Mosquito and Vector Control Association (www.ncmvca.org) represents government and private professionals who work to suppress or eliminate mosquitoes, ticks, and other potential vectors of disease. Our state government once had a robust group of medical entomologists (Public Health Pest Management) who would have been well placed to advise, assist, and intervene in the case of a local outbreak of Zika. The dismantling of that group in 2011, plus the elimination of state funding to local mosquito control agencies across the state, has left North Carolina vulnerable to this epidemic and others, including dengue, La Crosse, chikungunya, and West Nile viruses. North Carolina needs at least one PhD trained medical entomologist at the Department of Health and Human Services to assist as a conduit to local mosquito control programs conducting education, surveillance, and responses to vector borne disease outbreaks. Additionally, state funds should be made available to assist local agencies in vector control and conduct supporting research for North Carolina specific solutions. The long-term economic and health impacts of vector borne disease cases greatly outweigh the cost of a staff medical entomologist and supporting vector control.

Our nonprofit organization can serve as a conduit for information and some advisement, but we encourage the citizens of North Carolina to request sensible policies regarding existing and emerging pathogens carried by mosquitoes, ticks, or other arthropods by contacting their elected representatives (<http://www.ncleg.net/representation/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx>). The threat of vector-borne disease is ever-present and will increase as more people and goods move globally. We urge policy makers in the state to recognize that Zika is just one example of why we need to invest in a public health system that includes vector control. Maintaining an appropriate public health pest management infrastructure is important to ensure prevention of outbreaks rather than more costly, reactive responses.

For further information, we encourage members of the media to contact the North Carolina Mosquito and Vector Control Association through Dr. Michael Reiskind (mreiskind@gmail.com).

Dr. Michael Reiskind, Vice-President, North Carolina Mosquito and Vector Control Association.