MEMORANDUM

Date: February 11, 2016
To: College Presidents and Graduate School Deans
From: Allan Dobrin
Re: Zika Virus Preparedness

We have been monitoring the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Zika virus websites and would like to share some of the recent data and guidance with the CUNY community. We have already posted information on CUNY’s Environmental, Health, Safety and Risk Management website and on its Student Services website, and we have notified our International Education/Study Abroad/Campus Advisors. Because this is just a brief overview of Zika virus preparedness, we also encourage you to click on the links below periodically to obtain the most up-to-date information.

The current Zika virus outbreak has been most prevalent in the Caribbean and Central and South America. According to the CDC, no locally transmitted Zika infections have been reported in the continental United States, however there have been cases involving returning travelers from impacted countries. Zika virus is spread primarily by mosquito bites, although there are reports of possible blood-borne or sexual transmission. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis. Zika virus poses significant concerns for pregnant women, as it has been linked to birth defects and other serious complications in pregnancy and childbirth.

The CDC has posted guidelines for women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, and recommends that they consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing (http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/). For those that cannot postpone their travel, the CDC provides tips for minimizing mosquito exposure (http://www.cdc.gov/zika/fs-posters/index.html). Finally, the CDC also provides guidance to minimize Zika risk associated with sexual contact (http://www.cdc.gov/sexualhealth/Default.html).

The DOHMH indicated that there are three reported cases of Zika virus in New York City. These were all associated with travel to the affected region and all three have recovered (http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/zika-virus.page). The type of mosquito that spreads the virus has not been found in New York City.

We will continue to monitor the situation and update the campuses on Zika virus developments. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please contact Howard Apsan, University Director of Environmental, Health, Safety, and Risk Management (howard.apsan@cuny.edu).

Thank you.

cc: Chancellor
    Cabinet
    Administrative Council
    Howard Apsan