

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address June 24, 2016 “Protecting Americans against Zika Virus”

Hello, this is your Congressman, Michael Burgess.

Americans are facing the threat of a serious public health crisis as more people are traveling to areas of the Zika virus outbreak and then returning home to the United States.

This week Senator Cornyn and I joined forces in sending a letter to Secretary of State Kerry and the CDC Director Frieden about their responsibility to provide Americans with adequate information about the dangers of travelling to countries affected by the Zika virus.

If Americans continue to believe that it is safe to travel to countries where Zika virus is rampant, more will return home with the virus. This increases the risk for all Americans because if a mosquito bites someone who has carried Zika back into the U.S., that mosquito can infect anyone else it bites.

The State Department is failing to effectively notify Americans of the risks of travelling to areas of the outbreak. And the Center for Disease Control’s actions are more consistent with minimizing travel interruptions than protecting public health.

Americans rely on the expertise and the judgement of the Center for Disease Control and State Department in determining whether the benefits of travel to a particular destination outweigh the risks to safety and security.

Currently, Zika has a level 2 travel designation from the CDC— and that calls for practicing enhanced precautions when traveling. Instead, it should be at a Level 3 designation—which calls for avoiding all non-essential travel.

As a rule of thumb—if you do not want the Zika virus infection, do not travel to a country where it is being transmitted.

This week, Congress did approve its part of the funding to combat the Zika virus. It is now time that the Centers for Disease Control and the State Department take the necessary steps to provide Americans with the information they need to make the best decision about travel to areas of the virus outbreak.

As always, I appreciate your comments, your concern, on this issue or any other issue.

May God bless you and your family, and as the song says, God bless Texas.