

Venezuela Begins New Zika Fumigations



Caracas, January 30 (RHC-teleSUR) -- Venezuela has announced plans to begin a nationwide fumigation campaign, as part of broader efforts to counter the spread of the Zika virus.

The fumigation will target *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes, the main vector for Zika. The efforts to reduce the mosquito populations will be accompanied by plans to boost access to health care, according to Health Minister Luisana Melo.

Earlier this week the World Health Organization (WHO) called on countries across the Americas to take measures to curb the spread of Zika, warning the virus is already likely to reach all countries in the Americas except mainland Chile and Canada.

The mosquito-borne virus causes symptoms similar to dengue and chikungunya, including fever and joint pain. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, no confirmed cases of Zika have led to death, and symptoms normally last no longer than a week. Unofficial reports from Venezuela on Friday however have two or three deaths from Guillain Barre Syndrome. It also isn't clear though if GBS and Zika are related.

However, in recent weeks health officials have raised concerns the virus could be linked to a rare brain defect among newborn babies, which has caused deaths.

“Although Zika typically causes only mild symptoms, outbreaks in Brazil have coincided with a marked increase in microcephaly—or unusually small head size—in newborns,” the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has stated.

The organization recommended, “Pregnant women should be especially careful to avoid mosquito bites.”

“Health authorities and agencies are now investigating the potential connection between microcephaly and Zika virus, in addition to other possible causes. However more investigation and research is needed before we will be able to better understand any possible link,” WHO has said.

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