

NEWS RELEASE

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Date: July 27, 2016

Total Pages: 2

BLOOD BANK OF HAWAII PARTICIPATING IN ZIKA VIRUS SCREENING TRIALS

Taking a proactive approach to the potential threat that Zika Virus (ZIKV) may present to Hawaii's blood supply, Blood Bank of Hawaii (BBH) will participate in studies of a new screening assay being co-developed by Grifols and Hologic, leading partners in highly sensitive blood screening technologies. Testing with this assay, which the FDA has approved use of under a special investigational study status, is expected to begin on all BBH blood donations in the beginning of September.

"Zika virus poses a potentially significant threat to both blood safety and adequacy of our blood supply," said Kim-Anh Nguyen, MD, PhD, BBH president and CEO. "The global Zika epidemic now encompasses the South Pacific and is highly likely to reach Hawaii, where shutting down blood collection could devastate the local blood supply. As stewards of Hawaii's precious resource, it is BBH's responsibility to implement a proactive approach for the good of our community's public health."

Zika virus is transmitted through mosquito bites, sexual contact and potentially blood transfusion. Infection can cause miscarriages, severe birth defects, and death. To mitigate the possible risk of transfusion transmitted Zika virus, the FDA recently published guidance instructing blood centers in areas with active, local Zika cases to stop collecting blood, unless they test blood donors for Zika or implement pathogen inactivation technology.

"With our unique geographical location and tropical climate, Hawaii is implementing universal (100%) screening to ensure maximum safety and reliability for the State's blood supply," noted Nguyen. "Our participation in clinical trials for the ZIKV testing assay also provides valuable data to researchers to better understand the virus and possible prevention strategies. This puts Hawaii in the forefront globally."

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The addition of the new test will be transparent to blood donors, with only minor changes to the consent form and new information included in the donor education materials.

About Blood Bank of Hawaii

Founded in 1941, BBH is a non-profit organization committed to providing a safe and reliable supply of blood, blood products and related transfusion services to Hawaii's patients. BBH is licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, accredited by AABB, and a founding member of America's Blood Centers, the nation's largest network of community-based blood programs. For more information, visit www.BBH.org.

About the Zika Virus Testing Assay

BBH will use a new test, the Procleix Zika Virus blood screening assay, being co-developed by long-term partners in blood safety Grifols and Hologic, Inc. . As the legal manufacturer of the test, Hologic received clearance from the FDA for use of the test under the agency's Investigational New Drug (IND) study protocol. Today, Grifols Procleix systems are used to screen more blood donations around the world than any other NAT (nucleic-acid testing) blood screening products, and include tests for HIV, hepatitis, West Nile virus and more.

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