

## Surveillance Alert: Chikungunya (dengue-like) virus now locally transmitted in Caribbean

**Attention:** Physicians, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Family Health Teams, Midwives, Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, NSMICN, NSM LHIN, Central LHIN

**Date:** February 18, 2014

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**There have been confirmed cases of Chikungunya on the Caribbean islands of Saint Martin/Saint Maarten, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Barthélemy and the British Virgin Islands. This is the first time that local transmission of Chikungunya has been detected in the region of the Americas.** To date, we are not aware of any confirmed Chikungunya fever cases in Ontario related to the Caribbean. Canada has seen sporadic cases in prior years with travel history primarily from Asia.

Clinicians should be on the alert for sporadic cases of Chikungunya virus in patients who present with fever and arthralgia after a stay on an affected Caribbean island. **The disease is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.** Although caused by a different virus, the symptoms of Chikungunya can appear very similar to those of Dengue fever. **Patients typically present with fever and arthralgia. If there is a positive travel history, serology for both Chikungunya and dengue virus infection should be considered. Treatment is supportive. There is no preventive vaccine or medication.**

The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a travel health notice recommending that travelers consult a health care provider or visit a travel health clinic at least six weeks before they travel to the Caribbean, as well as take personal protective measures to avoid mosquito bites during the travel, in order to reduce the risk of exposure. Additional information on the cases and a fact sheet for clinicians is available on the Pan American Health Organization's website.

Viral hemorrhagic fever caused by viruses such as Dengue or Chikungunya are reportable to the Medical Officer of Health. If you suspect a case or have questions, please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Communicable Disease Team at 705-721-7520 Ext. 8809. After hours please call 1-888-225-7851.