



Durbin visits CDC Headquarters in Atlanta, briefed on public health crises, Zika virus

February 2 2016 8:48 AM



ATLANTA—U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today visited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, focusing on the CDC’s Emergency Operations Center and a pathology lab with CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden.

Durbin discussed the need for robust and reliable federal funding for our nation's federal health agencies including the CDC, whose scientists work around the world to track diseases, stop outbreaks, and respond to emergencies of all kinds, like foodborne illness outbreaks and last year's Ebola epidemic.

Durbin also discussed the recent rise in cases related to the Zika virus, which has spread across Brazil and 22 other countries in Central and South America—the CDC has so far confirmed 31 traveler-related cases in the United States, including three in Illinois. The World Health Organization today designated the Zika virus an international public health emergency, their highest level of alert. Zika is associated with steep increase in babies born with birth defects and neurological syndromes.

“The CDC is America's first line of national defense when we are threatened with a public health crisis,” said Durbin. **“My visit with Dr. Frieden and the dedicated staff at CDC confirmed that funding groundbreaking biomedical research, and protection of our nation's public health, must be a national priority.”**

Durbin is the author of the American Cures Act, which would provide robust funding for the CDC's work in biomedical research, which includes the development of vaccines and other measures that could reduce the impact of public health crises. The *American Cures Act* provides funding increase to the four largest federal agencies involved in biomedical research by lifting their budget caps: National Institutes of Health (NIH); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Department of Defense Health Program (DHP); and Department of Veteran Affairs Medical & Prosthetics Research Program. The bill would increase funding for these research agencies at a rate of GDP inflation + 5%. The new funding would start at \$1.8 billion the first year and increase gradually each year for 10 years. In all, the bill would dedicate \$150 billion over the next decade for biomedical research.