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TO:  Utica College Students, Faculty, and Staff

FROM:  Julie Murawski MS, ANP-C, Director of Student Health Center

SUBJ:  Zika Virus

As you may be aware, there exists a growing health concern regarding the Zika virus which is transmitted by a particular species of mosquito currently found in Central and South America as well as the Caribbean. We are sharing this information out of concern for you, members of your family, or friends who may reside in, be planning to travel to, or who have recently returned from one of the infected areas. Just last week the American College Health Association released the following alert:

“In May 2015, the World Health Organization reported the first local transmission of Zika virus in the Western Hemisphere, with autochthonous (locally acquired) cases identified in Brazil. As of February 1, 2016, local transmission has been identified in at least 25 countries or territories in the Americas, including Puerto Rico. Also, as of February 2, 2016, one case of locally acquired and sexually transmitted Zika virus infection was confirmed in a patient in Texas. Possible cases of sexual transmission have been reported before, and the virus has occasionally been isolated in the seminal fluid of sick patients.”

While the Zika virus is of particular concern to pregnant women, the fact that it can be transmitted sexually makes it a concern for everyone. We encourage you to further update yourselves on this issue, but have provided the following information for your consideration.

If you are planning to travel to an infected area for business, a family vacation, or spring break, be sure that you:

- Review all health advisories for that area
- Consult with a healthcare professional regarding recommendations for remaining safe
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants with socks
- Regularly apply and reapply a recommended repellent under clothing
- Treat clothing with a repellent designed for that purpose
- Stay in air conditioned or densely screened areas

Common symptoms of the Zika virus include fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). If you believe that you have been infected through a mosquito bite:

- See a healthcare provider immediately
- Avoid areas with mosquitoes, as the virus can be spread from infected to non-infected individuals through mosquito bites
- Avoid all sexual relations if possible, but at the very least avoid unprotected sex.

For more detailed information, go to the following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention site:  
wwwnc.cdc.gov/Travel