



Left to right, Dr. David Dosa, the associate director of the VA Center of Innovation in Long-Term Services and Supports for Vulnerable Veterans, Debra D'Allesandro, the center's administrative officer, Krista Tocco, program assistant, and Dr. James Rudolph, the center's director, at the Providence VA Medical Center Monday, April 11, 2016. The center was awarded funding for continued research by VA Health Services Research and Development, to improve the access, quality and value of long-term care for vulnerable veterans.

### Long-Term Services Research for Vulnerable Vets gets funding

PROVIDENCE – The VA Center of Innovation in Long-Term Services and Supports for Vulnerable Veterans, located at the Providence VA Medical Center, was awarded funding for continued research by VA Health Services Research and Development.

“With the projected doubling of veterans over 65 years old who will be eligible for VA-funded long-term care in the next 10 years, there’s a critical need for innovative ways of providing long-term care that both meets the needs of veterans and promotes their independence,” said **DR. JAMES RUDOLPH**, director of the LTSS Research Center. “Long-Term Services and Supports are focused on keeping veterans in their home as long as possible, which is not only the veterans’ preferred environment, but is cost effective, as well.”

The overall goal of the research is to improve the access, quality and value of LTSS for veterans. To do this, the center has launched a Collaborative Research to Enhance and Advance Transformation and Excellence, called CREATE, program focused on improving care for veterans in long-term care, and a Community Nursing Home Quality Enhancement Research Initiative, called CNH-QUERI, to measure and improve the quality of care provided to veterans in community nursing homes. Other initiatives are focused on shifting care from the nursing home to the home.

The new funding will continue the research through fiscal year 2021. Rudolph said, “The LTSS Center of Innovation works closely with VA Geriatrics leadership to design research that will improve care today and build a system for innovative long-term care tomorrow.”

“The continued funding of these initiatives, combined with our research partnerships with the Brown Center for Gerontology and the University of Rhode Island, will help us deliver the excellence in long-term care Veterans have earned through their service,” said **DR. SUSAN MACKENZIE**, director of the Providence VA Medical Center. ❖

### Health department confirms first case of Zika virus in RI

PROVIDENCE – On April 19th, The Rhode Island Department of Health announced the first confirmed case of Zika virus in the state. The individual who tested positive, a male in his 60s, had recently traveled to Haiti, where there is active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika.

“We have been closely monitoring the Zika situation internationally and have been coordinating with Rhode Island healthcare providers for months. We were fully prepared for this first case,” said Director of Health Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH. “While the risk to the public is very low, we are coordinating with doctors, especially those who work with pregnant women, on how best to identify symptoms and educate patients about prevention.”

Measures that RIDOH has taken to prepare include:

- Established a Zika Task Force that includes fetal medicine specialists from Women & Infants Hospital in February;
- Issuing regular briefs to Rhode Island healthcare providers with updated guidance and information on symptoms and specimen collection;
- Coordinating patient specimen collection and shipment to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and
- Coordinating with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management for increased mosquito surveillance and larvaciding.

Zika is spread primarily through bites from infected mosquitoes. It can also be spread sexually.

“We don’t expect locally-acquired cases here because the species of mosquitos that are currently known to transmit Zika are not found in Rhode Island,” said Dr. Alexander-Scott. “However, Rhode Islanders who are pregnant or are considering becoming pregnant should avoid travel to countries where there is active transmission of the virus.” ❖