**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | January 29, 2016**

Kevin Nix, Director of Communications | knix@legacycommunityhealth.org

(832) 548-5136 or (202) 431-5796

**Amid Zika Concerns, Legacy Community Health Issues Advisory for Pregnant Women in Houston Area**

HOUSTON, TX – Legacy Community Health, one of the largest Federally Qualified Health Centers in the nation, today urged pregnant women in the Houston area to refrain from traveling to South or Central America, a region that is currently seeing an outbreak of Zika, the mosquito-borne virus linked to birth defects. Legacy sees a number of patients who travel south to the affected region.

“Our main goal right now is to raise awareness of the virus,” said Faith Whittier, an obstetrician-gynecologist at Legacy. “We are advising our pregnant patients in the Houston area to play it safe and not travel to the countries on CDC’s warning list.”

The Centers for Disease Control travel warning list can be found [here.](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices) Visitors to the U.S. from the affected region could bring the virus into the country, according to the CDC, resulting in the “local spread of the virus in some areas of the United States.”

The virus is transmitted through mosquito bites, and most patients are unaware they have been infected. The most common symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes.  Local health officials so far have confirmed at least three cases of Zika in the area, all travelers who returned to Houston from Latin America.

“There is no need to be alarmed at this point, but we do want to stay ahead of this thing, which means taking precautions now and assiduously monitoring our patients and the spread of the virus,” added Whittier.

[*Legacy Community Health,*](http://www.legacycommunityhealth.org.)*a not-for-profit Federally Qualified Health Center, provides comprehensive care to over 85,000 community members regardless of their ability to pay. The agency, a United Way of Greater Houston agency, provides adult primary care, HIV/AIDS care, pediatrics, OB/GYN and maternity, dental, vision and behavioral health.*

###