



**BOLD
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REAL-WORLD
IMPACT**

Eastern Equine Encephalitis

The Triple E Challenge

Deaths in the U.S. from Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in 2019 have reached double digits—a record. As climate change enables mosquitoes that carry EEE to thrive, the numbers will get worse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 21 states have had EEE cases since 2009, with the Atlantic and Gulf Coast states and the Great Lakes region the most vulnerable areas. With no known treatment, 30 percent of cases are fatal.

Prevention is key. Individuals who play or work outdoors near freshwater swamps can use bug repellent, wear long clothes and clear out standing water. But governments can help, too, and we can help governments—Abt Associates is a global leader in mosquito-borne disease research and prevention.

Our experience—leading projects that have protected millions of people in dozens of countries from mosquito-borne diseases—equips us to work with state and local governments to protect their citizens.

How We Can Help on the Ground

The first step is to understand the magnitude of the problem. That's particularly important for the hardest hit states, such as Florida, Massachusetts, New York and North Carolina. Officials should consider taking action in five critical areas to protect citizens from EEE. Abt has the experience to help you with all of them.

1. Data for Decision-making

It starts with a rigorous, evidence-based assessment of which populations are vulnerable, the capacity of the community to respond and the relevant stakeholders needed for coordination and collaboration. When Zika was discovered in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador,



Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras, we conducted rapid assessments to pinpoint capacity strengths and gaps.

Assessing the mosquitoes themselves also is critical since integrated vector control relies heavily on surveillance. We currently conduct entomological monitoring in 23 countries.

With collaborators at the University of California, Davis, for example, Abt scientists designed and conducted lab and field entomological research on the mosquito species that carry the Zika virus. The project included field studies to inform local and regional vector control and the public health response. Abt also examined how environmental conditions affect transmission.

2. Crisis Communications

Within three days of the first Zika outbreak in Wynwood, Fla., Abt's health communicators, graphic designers and public health professionals had tested and were running the first ads in an extensive multi-language, multi-channel campaign—a process that normally takes months. The crisis communications campaign we developed with the CDC ultimately comprised nearly 370 creative pieces in two months.

We used digital and social media, including animated banner ads, Facebook and Instagram ads and Google AdWords to target audiences. Other media channels—including in-flight magazines, newspaper and radio ads and billboards—provided broader audience reach. Digital and social networking enabled rapid dissemination of prevention messages and hyper-targeting of audiences. In all, we reached more than 37 million people.

We also created a partner toolkit to help state and local health departments produce and promote Zika education events. In addition, we developed and launched a text message notification system that alerted travelers about Zika outbreak information.

3. Building Community Awareness

In Jamaica, we visited homes on weekends and holidays, when residents were likely to be there, to explain the importance of Zika prevention and to spray structures with insecticide. Home visits in San Salvador included checks of water storage containers to make sure they were covered and didn't have mosquito larvae or eggs. Each home received an easy-to-understand health report card featuring either a smiling face for being larvae free or a sad face for failing to clean up breeding places.

4. Behavior Change

Good communication must bridge different cultures, practices and customs. Abt has extensive experience working with communities, stakeholders and agencies to design and implement effective campaigns. Jamaica posed a severe test because residents consider mosquitoes a fact of life. One tactic we used: reggae. We created a song in a Jamaican dialect, focused it on Zika, performed it widely and sang and danced our message into Jamaicans' consciousness.

5. Capacity Building

To combat malaria, we developed country-specific capacity building action plans to guide countries toward full ownership of indoor residual spraying. In Mali, we built the capacity of health managers to monitor malaria control activities and evaluate against international best practices.

We can apply proven disease prevention approaches to meet specific needs at the local or state level.

Abt's malaria spraying project in Africa helped reduce malaria incidence between 2000 and 2015 by **42 percent** and mortality by **66 percent**, including a **71 percent** decline in deaths of children under 5.

Three days after the first Zika outbreak in Florida, Abt was running tested ads for a CDC campaign. In **two months**, we produced **370 components**, including ads, billboards, social media messages and more, reaching over **37 million people**.

About Abt

Abt Associates provides research, consulting and technical services worldwide with a focus on health, social and environmental policy, technology and international development.

Rapid Response. Real Results.

For more than a decade, Abt has fought mosquito-borne illnesses in dozens of countries. Our innovative—and proven—approaches have protected more than 36 million people.

We can help you protect your citizens from Triple E and tomorrow's next vector-based disease. Ready to take the next step? **Contact Tiff Sisman.**

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