

Whistleblower Punished For Revealing CDC Uses Less Accurate Zika Tests

Zoe McAlister September 29, 2016



Dr Lanciotti was demoted from being in charge to a non-supervisory position within his lab for insisting the CDC should use more effective tests.

([Newswire.net](http://newswire.net) -- September 28, 2016) -- WASHINGTON, D.C. - Dr. Robert Lanciotti, a microbiologist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), raised concerns that the CDC is using less effective tests for detecting the Zika virus, instead of tests he

claim are more accurate.

According to Dr. Lanciotti, an alternative approach in his studies proved to be more effective in detecting Zika, however, the CDC refuses to acknowledge his research, creating “a substantial and specific danger to public health.”

The tests in question are the Trioplex and the Singleplex. The first detects not only Zika, but also dengue and chikungunya and is recommended by the CDC. The second test is only used for diagnosing the Zika virus and is preferred at Lanciotti’s lab based in Fort Collins, Colorado.

The [US Office of Special Counsel](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/28/osc-letter-to-white-house) (OSC) said in a letter to the White House “Dr. Lanciotti alleged that use of the Trioplex in place of the Singleplex in a clinical setting would result in an additional 39 percent of Zika infections in their acute phase going undetected,” which implied that tests are almost 40% inaccurate.

Lanciotti provided evidence that proves that the Trioplex test is less effective; however, the CDC’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) ignored it.

Undoubtedly convinced in the results of his research, Lanciotti tried to do more. He emailed his colleagues in about 30 public health laboratories, informing them that he was still using Singleplex rather than Trioplex.

CDC officials said the agency conducted its own investigation that proves “Dr. Lanciotti’s allegations are not substantiated.”

“[t]here is insufficient, statistically robust, definitive data to reach an evidence-based conclusion that use of the Trioplex assay over the Singleplex in clinical practice will result in 39 percent of Zika virus infections being missed,” CDC stated, dismissing any substantial and specific danger to public health.

The investigation conducted by the CDC was carried out in its lab in Puerto Rico, which found there is no lack in sensitivity in the Trioplex test. Shortly after raising the concern that the CDC recommends less effective Zika detection tests, Dr. Lanciotti was demoted to an insignificant position in his laboratory.

After Dr. Lanciotti filed a whistleblower retaliation claim, the federal investigative agency pressured the CDC to reinstate Dr. Lanciotti to his laboratory chief position.

The CDC still recommends Trioplex test for detection of Zika virus, which cause microcephaly in newborn babies.

Source: <http://newswire.net/newsroom/news/00093707-whistleblower-punished-for-revealing-cdc-uses-less-accurate-zika-tests.html>