



August 2, 2016

Dear Parents,

As Country Director of MPI Nicaragua, I want to update you on the Zika virus specifically in Nicaragua. First and foremost, Manna Project International is committed to the safety and security of our volunteers and staff.

Though Zika has become well-known by name due to its effect on pregnant women who are infected, Zika poses a low health risk for nonpregnant individuals. You may have also heard Zika has been linked to a rare neurological disorder called Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS). Research has shown the incidence of GBS to be .00024% amongst all Zika infections and is thus not considered to be a common occurrence.¹

Zika is characterized by mild symptoms such as rash, fever, red eyes and joint pain which typically clear up within one week.² Treatment consists of rest, fluids and pain medication to help manage the symptoms while the body fights off the virus. Our volunteers are provided with information on local health services including a trusted physician able to assess symptoms and prescribe appropriate medication, and health centers which offer a blood test to confirm the presence of Zika.

Our goal is to do all we can to decrease the risk of Zika and other mosquito-borne illnesses. Our volunteers are briefed on immediate steps they can take to reduce transmission of Zika according to the latest recommendations provided by the World Health Organization.³ We have undertaken a thorough review process of all areas surrounding the Manna Project house, and continue to eliminate any standing water which may serve as potential mosquito breeding grounds. We have reinforced all window screens in the house in order to decrease the entry of mosquitoes. Volunteers have also been briefed on the importance of personal protective methods, which include wearing 20% and up DEET repellent in addition to protective clothing. We also held a special session on mosquito-borne illnesses prevention in order to ensure our Program Directors are well-informed on best practices for prevention.

Nicaragua is a beautiful country, which I hope your child is learning to admire and love as much as I do. I am so grateful to get to work with your child over the year ahead.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christina Palazzo", written in a cursive style.

Christina Palazzo
Nicaragua Country Director

1. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/204718/1/zikasitrep_31Mar2016_eng.pdf
2. <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/about/>
3. <http://www.who.int/features/qa/zika/en/>