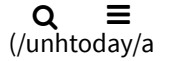




NEWSROOM (//WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS)



UNH Research Finds Eroding Trust in Scientists Could Hinder Efforts to Stop Zika

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2017/03/21/UNH-RESEARCH-FINDS-ERODING-TRUST-SCIENTISTS-COULD-HINDER-EFFORTS-STOP-ZIKA)
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DURHAM, N.H. – Nearly half of New Hampshire residents surveyed believe scientists adjust their findings to get the answers they want, and these people are significantly less likely to trust the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as a source of information on the Zika virus, according to new research released by the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire.

Individuals who question the integrity of scientists also are less likely to believe the Zika virus is a threat to public health and less likely to have confidence in government-led efforts to combat the virus or prioritize emergency federal funding for Zika, the researchers found.

“The Zika virus remains a relatively remote health risk for New Hampshire residents, but their skepticism about scientists, and the way this skepticism appears to erode confidence in agencies like the CDC, may be the real threat to public health,” the researchers said. “This distrust will likely undermine efforts to combat not only the spread of Zika, but also other infectious diseases and environmental risks that are more immediate dangers to the health and safety of both Granite Staters and the American public in general.”

According to the researchers, most New Hampshire residents view the Zika virus as a minor threat to public health in the U.S. and trust the CDC as a source of information on the virus. More than one-third of residents believe emergency federal funding to combat Zika is a high priority but most are only somewhat confident in the government’s ability to curb the spread of the disease.

The full report can be found here: <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/zika> (<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/zika>)

The research was conducted by Thomas Safford, associate professor of sociology and faculty fellow at Carsey, Lawrence Hamilton, professor of sociology and senior Carsey fellow, and Emily Whitmore, sociology graduate student.

The Carsey School of Public Policy conducts research, leadership development, and engaged scholarship relevant to public policy. They address pressing challenges, striving for innovative, responsive, and equitable solutions at all levels of government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH,

receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

Media Contact

Erika Mantz (/unhtoday/contributor/erika-mantz) | Communications and Public Affairs | erika.mantz@unh.edu (mailto:erika.mantz@unh.edu)

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Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu (mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu). (mailto:unh.today@unh.edu)

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