



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

August 5, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

Over the past several months, we have seen the expansion of the global outbreak of monkeypox virus. As case counts continue to rise, including here in Maryland, we want to provide you with some related updates:

Clinical Recognition

We continue to urge all Maryland clinicians to remain aware of the most current clinical information in order to recognize cases in a timely manner. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides a useful selection of pictures of the rash, and other clinical signs and symptoms on their [monkeypox outbreak page](#). We urge Maryland providers to consider the possibility of monkeypox virus infections in patients presenting with appropriate signs and symptoms and ensure that such patients are [appropriately isolated](#) while being evaluated in a healthcare setting.

Testing

Nationwide, testing capacity for monkeypox virus has expanded. Multiple commercial labs have brought a monkeypox virus test online in the past two weeks, and we anticipate more coming in the next month. We encourage providers to make use of these commercial labs for patient testing when possible. Testing from commercial laboratories may be ordered at the discretion of the clinician; no MDH or local health department approval is needed. Providers should ensure that they continue to report any positive tests immediately to the local health department.

Guidance for Patients

Providers ordering monkeypox virus testing will be responsible for communicating isolation guidance to their patients; namely that the patient should remain in isolation at home until results come back, as per [CDC home isolation guidance](#). Patients who test negative for monkeypox virus may end isolation based on any alternative diagnoses and their clinical presentation. Patients who test positive should remain in isolation until the rash has fully resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed. They should also be informed that the local health department will follow up with them to identify close contacts who might meet criteria for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) vaccination.

Vaccinations

The state currently has limited quantities of the Jynneos vaccine. The state is working closely with local health departments and other partners to make doses available in a manner that focuses on locations that have higher case counts and larger higher-risk populations. Based on CDC guidelines and the limited federal vaccine supply, state and local health officials are prioritizing vaccinations courses for PEP in:

- **Public Health Identified Close Contacts:** Known close contacts who are identified by public health via case investigation, contact tracing, and risk exposure assessments.
- **Occupational Exposure:** Healthcare workers who may have been exposed to a known case and Laboratory Response Network (LRN) or other laboratory staff working directly with monkeypox testing.

State and local health officials are also following CDC guidelines to make vaccines available, as supplies allow and initially in more greatly impacted areas, to:

- **Self-Identified Partners of Cases:** Individuals who are aware that one of their sexual partners from the past two weeks has been diagnosed with monkeypox.
- **Affected Community Members:** Individuals in high-risk populations who report recent group sex or sex with multiple partners or sex or employment at a venue or in association with an event, venue, or defined geographic area where monkeypox transmission has been reported.

Treatment

Some patients with monkeypox might be candidates for treatment with the tecovirimat (TPOXX), an antiviral medication available from the US Strategic National Stockpile via an Expanded Access Investigational New Drug (EA-IND) process. Details about the use of TPOXX and the EA-IND are available from [CDC](#). If you wish to treat a patient with TPOXX and your healthcare system does not already have a process for obtaining the medication, contact your local health department for additional guidance about how you can treat your patient.

PPE and Monitoring for Healthcare Workers

Healthcare workers who interact with patients who may have monkeypox virus should continue to wear gowns, gloves, eye protection and a surgical mask or N95. Any healthcare workers wearing appropriate PPE would be at low risk of infection; these individuals should be aware of their low risk exposure, and should monitor themselves for signs and symptoms but do not need to be excluded from work. In the event of a PPE breach, or if a healthcare worker comes into direct skin to skin contact with a patient's lesions or surrounding bedding and environment, the risk may be [intermediate or high](#). In those cases, the healthcare worker should be referred to the health department for assessment for post exposure prophylaxis vaccination. These staff should also receive active monitoring for signs and symptoms but may continue to work as long as they remain asymptomatic.

Additional Information

Additional information is available at the MDH and CDC websites:

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/Pages/monkeypox.aspx>

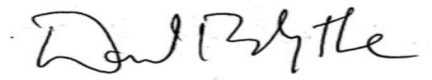
<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>

Thank you for your continued support with this evolving situation.

Sincerely,



Jinlene Chan, MD, MPH, FAAP
Deputy Secretary, Public Health Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Blythe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "B".

David Blythe, MD, MPH
State Epidemiologist and Director,
Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Outbreak Response Bureau