



This is an official **DHEC Health Update**

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Updated Guidance for the Evaluation and Treatment of Monkeypox (MPX)

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is providing this Health Advisory to update health care providers about the availability of MPX testing, reporting requirements, access to antiviral treatment for severe cases of MPX infection, and vaccination programs against MPX.

Summary:

- **This HAN serves to provide South Carolina specific information in addition to the CDC HAN co-released on July 29, 2022.**
- **MPX is now an urgently reportable condition to DHEC, meaning it must be reported within 24 hours by electronic notification or by phone. This includes both confirmed cases and suspect cases undergoing testing.**
- **Testing for MPX can be coordinated through the SC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) or performed in one of five commercial laboratories (LabCorp, Quest Diagnostics, Mayo Clinic Laboratories, Aegis Science, and Sonic Healthcare). Providers considering sending specimens to PHL must contact their DHEC regional epidemiologist prior to shipping (see DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements).**
- **The antiviral drug tecovirimat (TPOXX) is available for use from DHEC and the CDC under an Expanded Access Investigational New Drug (EA-IND) protocol. Physicians requesting this drug for their patients should call the DHEC Physician On-Call through the Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control.**
- **DHEC has stood up vaccination clinics across the state to provide access to Jynneos for those most at risk of exposure to MPX.**

Background

DHEC reported the first individuals infected with MPX in South Carolina on July 7, 2022 and has continued to actively respond to the MPX outbreak. As case detection has increased globally, in the nation, and in the state, DHEC continues to work on disease containment through exposure prevention and education, case identification and isolation, and vaccination of those most at risk of exposure to MPX. Although we expect to identify more cases in the coming weeks, DHEC's goal at this time is to contain the outbreak; strong medical and public health partnership is needed to accomplish this.

Evaluation, Assessment, and Notification of Suspect Monkeypox Cases

Individuals with a [rash consistent with MPX](#) with or without epidemiologic links should be considered for MPX testing. Current understanding of this outbreak is that anyone having prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with someone with MPX can become infected, but the outbreak is centered in the gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men community. People who have a clinically compatible illness should receive a comprehensive evaluation that includes travel and sexual history, screening for other infectious diseases that could be in the differential diagnosis (including HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes, and varicella), and referral for treatment as needed. Some individuals with MPX have had co-infections with STIs and others are eligible for HIV PrEP.

Currently, it is not necessary to first consult with your DHEC regional epidemiologist prior to initiating MPX diagnostic testing. However, DHEC staff can assist as needed. Providers should report any patient suspect of MPX infection to DHEC. Regional epidemiology teams will use this information to initiate identifying close contacts for timely public health action. DHEC encourages sending specimens from highly probable cases (based on clinical and epidemiologic factors) to PHL; however, this must be facilitated by regional Epi teams prior to transport. Commercial laboratories are also accepting specimens for testing but have on average longer turnaround times than PHL. Not all commercial laboratories follow the same specimen collection and transport criteria as PHL.

Antiviral Treatment TPOXX Available in South Carolina

TPOXX is FDA-approved for smallpox infection but not monkeypox. CDC has an expanded access Investigational New Drug application (EA-IND) to allow access to and use of TPOXX to treat MPX. DHEC has worked with CDC, ASPR, and other federal agencies to obtain and preposition oral and IV tecovirimat for rapid access to treatment for severe cases of MPX infection. Considerations for the use of TPOXX can be found on the [CDC webpage](#). If a physician feels TPOXX might be warranted for their patient with MPX, they should call DHEC's Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology (see bottom of contact list below) and ask to speak to the Physician On-Call to discuss treatment and patient monitoring. The EA-IND requires completion of some forms to obtain the medication prior to treatment initiation. TPOXX is provided at no cost to patients.

Access to Jynneos Vaccine

The supply of Jynneos, an FDA-approved vaccine for monkeypox and smallpox is limited. South Carolina was allocated a relatively small number of doses based on the population at risk and early case incidence. DHEC requested all of South Carolina's allocated doses and has implemented [plans to administer vaccine to those at highest risk of exposure](#). Additional doses are coming in upcoming allocations. Our vaccine strategy is just one element of disease control and does not replace the urgency of primary prevention of exposure. Prevention messaging and direct outreach to populations disproportionately affected in this outbreak is being conducted statewide.

DHEC is directing two simultaneous vaccine campaigns. In the first, DHEC distributed vaccine to public health regions for use as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Identified close contacts of MPX-infected individuals may be eligible for PEP in this vaccine campaign. Regional epidemiologists are working with regional immunization staff in DHEC to execute this campaign.

The second vaccine campaign extends PEP to eligible people who may have been exposed to MPX in the past two weeks. Individuals meeting the eligibility criteria described below can call the DHEC CareLine at (855) 472-3432 to schedule an appointment for the vaccine at selected local health departments. Individuals should call if 1) they are age 18 years or older, 2) self-identify as gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, or gender non-binary, and 3) had more than one male sexual or intimate partner in the last 14 days. As DHEC receives more vaccines and learns more about people disproportionately affected, additional populations may be included in this campaign.

At this time, health care workers are not eligible for vaccination and should [continue to use PPE](#) to protect themselves when evaluating patients with suspect monkeypox.

Please visit [scdhec.gov/mpx](https://www.scdhec.gov/mpx) or [cdc.gov/monkeypox](https://www.cdc.gov/monkeypox) for continued updates and resources.

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of **Monkeypox** is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2022 List of Reportable Conditions available at: <https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2022			
Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region			
MAIL TO:			
<u>Lowcountry</u> 4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600 N. Charleston, SC 29405 Fax: (843) 953-0051	<u>Midlands</u> 2000 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29204 Fax: (803) 576-2993	<u>Pee Dee</u> 1931 Industrial Park Road Conway, SC 29526 Fax: (843) 915-6506	<u>Upstate</u> 352 Halton Road Greenville, SC 29607 Fax: (864) 282-4373
CALL TO:			
<u>Lowcountry</u> Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg Office: (843) 441-1091 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091	<u>Midlands</u> Aiken, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, York Office: (888) 801-1046 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046	<u>Pee Dee</u> Clarendon, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg Office: (843) 915-8886 Nights/Weekends: (843) 409-0695	<u>Upstate</u> Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union Office: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (864) 423-6648
For information on reportable conditions, see https://www.scdhec.gov/ReportableConditions		<u>DHEC Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention & Control</u> Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology 2100 Bull St • Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (803) 898-0861 • Fax: (803) 898-0897 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902	

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- Health Alert** Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- Health Advisory** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- Health Update** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
- Service** Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.