



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: December 15, 2023

From: Public Health Services

Health Advisory: Clade I Mpox Virus in Travelers to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Key Messages

- Sexually transmitted Clade I mpox infections are occurring in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and can cause more severe mpox disease with higher case fatality rates than Clade IIb.
- Providers should consider Clade I infections among travelers and close contacts of travelers to the DRC.
- Report suspected Clade I mpox cases to County Public Health and collect multiple clinical specimens for preliminary and confirmatory clade-specific testing.

Situation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a new [Health Alert](#) about the ongoing outbreak of Clade I mpox infection in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). For 2023 in the DRC, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) has reported](#) the highest number of annual cases of mpox cases on record. Additionally, the first documented cases of sexually transmitted Clade I mpox were identified this year in the DRC.

Background

There are two distinct genetic clades (subtypes) of the mpox virus. Clade I is endemic to Central Africa (including the DRC) and is more transmissible and more severe, resulting in higher case fatality rates than Clade IIb, which is currently circulating in the United States and responsible for the 2022-2023 outbreak. Both Clades produce a similar [clinical syndrome, including the characteristic rash](#). Clade I was previously associated with nonsexual human-to-human transmission, however, was recently linked to sexual transmission among visitors to a club of men who have sex with men in the DRC.

There have been no Clade I mpox infections detected in the United States to date.

Vaccines and other medical countermeasures are expected to be effective against Clade I mpox. [CDC continues to recommend](#) that people with the sexual risk factors for mpox get vaccinated now if they have not already received two doses of JYNNEOS vaccine. CDC does not currently recommend more than two vaccine doses.

Actions Requested

1. **Obtain** travel history in patients with [mpox-like symptoms](#) and consider Clade I mpox among travelers and close contacts (including sexual contacts) of travelers returning from the DRC.
2. **Report** suspected Clade I mpox cases to County HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Branch within one working day using a Confidential Morbidity Report faxed to (619) 692-8541 or sent by secure e-mail to phs-hshb-stdreporting-fax.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov.
3. **Collect** multiple specimens from suspected Clade I mpox cases for preliminary and confirmatory clade-specific testing.

- a. For mpox specimen submission to San Diego Public Health Laboratory, call 619-692-5500 (8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday) or 858-565-5255 (afterhours or weekends).
4. **Vaccinate** people who are [vulnerable to mpox or who request the vaccine](#), with two doses of JYNNEOS vaccine separated by 28 days. Encourage people who have received one dose of JYNNEOS to get their second dose.

Resources

National

[Mpox Vaccine Recommendations | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
[Vaccines | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
[Clinical Recognition | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
[Mpox \(monkeypox\)- Democratic Republic of the Congo \(who.int\)](#)

State

[Clade I Mpox Virus with Geographic Spread in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Recommendations for California Health Care Providers](#)

County

[Mpox Vaccine \(sandiegocounty.gov\)](#)

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency
Phone: (619) 692-8499; Fax: (858) 715-6458
E-mail: cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov
Public Website: <http://www.cahansandiego.com>

Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch
Urgent Phone for pm/weekends/holidays: (858) 565-5255
Secure Website: <http://cahan.ca.gov>