



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: August 15, 2024

From: Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #2: Clade I Mpox Human-to-Human Transmission and Geographical Spread in Africa

Key Messages

- Mpox infections from clade I monkeypox virus (MPXV) continue to increase in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with confirmed spread of clade I MPXV to neighboring countries in central and east Africa.
- Clade I MPXV is associated with increased transmissibility and fatality rates compared to the clade IIb MPXV that continues to circulate in the United States.
- Providers should screen patients with possible mpox infection who report recent travel to east and central African countries that border DRC or close contact to travelers returning from these areas within the prior 21 days for clade I MPXV.
- Medical countermeasures used in the ongoing global outbreak (e.g., vaccines, tecovirimat (TPOXX), brincidofovir, and vaccinia immune globulin intravenous) are anticipated to be effective for clade I mpox. Providers should offer vaccination to patients who are vulnerable to mpox or request the vaccine.
- If clade I MPXV infection is suspected, notify County of San Diego Public Health Services immediately and obtain clade-specific MPXV testing (available through the San Diego Public Health Laboratory).

Situation

On August 7, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a [health alert](#) regarding the ongoing widespread clade I monkeypox virus (MPXV) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and geographic spread of clade I MPXV to several neighboring countries. On August 14, 2024, the World Health Organization declared mpox a public health emergency of international concern due to the growing outbreak in Africa.

Background

MPXV has two distinct clades or subtypes, I and II, which are endemic to central and west Africa, respectively. Clade I MPXV has previously been observed to be more transmissible (generally via nonsexual routes) and associated with a higher proportion of severe infections and case fatality rates than clade II MPXV. A subtype of clade II MPXV, clade IIb, is responsible for the ongoing global outbreak that began in 2022 and has predominately affected gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

Clade I mpox cases have continued to increase within DRC, where more than 22,000 suspect cases and more than 1,200 suspected deaths have been reported since January 1, 2023. Outbreaks of clade I MPXV associated with sexual contact among MSM and female sex workers and their contacts have been reported in some provinces in DRC, as has mpox acquisition through contact with infected dead or live wild animals, household transmission, and patient care (transmitted in the absence of appropriate personal protective equipment).

Confirmed clade I MPXV cases were reported in April in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Republic of the Congo (ROC). In late July 2024, clade I cases were confirmed in Rwanda and Uganda. Cases were also confirmed in Burundi and presumed to be clade I, due to the country's proximity to DRC and Rwanda, while clade-specific testing is conducted. Clade I MPXV is not known to be endemic in Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. To date, no cases of clade I mpox have been reported outside of Africa, and CDC considers the risk of clade I MPXV importation to the United States to be very low due to the limited number of travelers and lack of direct commercial flights from DRC or its neighboring countries to the United States. However, health care providers are advised to have a heightened index of suspicion for clade I mpox in patients with recent travel to Africa who present with [signs and symptoms consistent with mpox](#).

For further details, please see recent health alerts from CDC ([August 7, 2024](#)) and the California Department of Public Health ([August 12, 2024](#))

Actions Requested

1. **Take a travel history** for patients with mpox-like symptoms or probable/confirmed mpox and inquire about travel of any close contacts in 21 days before onset. Consider clade I MPXV for anyone who reports that they have traveled to or been in contact with someone who recently traveled to DRC or any of the countries that border DRC (ROC, CAR, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Zambia, Angola, Tanzania, and South Sudan) in the last 21 days.
2. **Report** probable, suspected, and confirmed clade I MPXV cases to the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after diagnosis by submitting a Confidential Morbidity Report (by fax to (619) 692-8541 or by secure e-mail to phs-hshb-stdreporting-fax.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov).
3. **Test** for clade I MPXV by submitting clinical specimens for clade-specific MPXV testing if clade I MPXV is suspected. General (i.e., clade-nonspecific) MPXV testing is available through commercial laboratories and the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (SDCPHL). If clade I MPXV is suspected, refer to [SDCPHL Guidelines](#) to obtain approval for clade-specific MPXV testing and for detailed instructions on sample collection, storage, and transport.
4. **Vaccinate** people who are vulnerable to mpox or who request the vaccine with two doses of the JYNNEOS vaccine with a dosing interval of four weeks.
5. **Refer** eligible patients to the [STOMP](#) (Study of Tecovirimat for Mpox) trial. Contact the MHOAC (MHOAC.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov) for patients for whom tecovirimat is indicated and who are ineligible for or decline participation in STOMP. Please note that eligibility criteria for tecovirimat under CDC's Expanded Access Investigational New Drug (EA-IND) protocol have changed recently and are available [here](#).

Resources

National

[Mpox Caused by Human-to-Human Transmission of Monkeypox Virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Spread to Neighboring Countries | Health Alert Network \(August 7, 2024\)](#)

[Clinical Recognition | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

[Mpox Vaccine Recommendations | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

[Vaccination | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

[Tecovirimat \(TPOXX\) for Treatment of Mpox | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

[2023 Outbreak in Democratic Republic of the Congo | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

State

[Update on Clade I Mpox Geographical Spread in Africa: Recommendations for California Health Care Providers \(August 12, 2024\)](#)

County

[Health Advisory: Clade I Mpox Virus in Travelers to the Democratic Republic of the Congo \(December 15, 2023\)](#)
[Mpox in San Diego County](#)
[Mpox Vaccine](#)

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Branch

Phone (for providers, M-F 8AM-5PM): (619) 692-5500 (referrals for mpox evaluation, testing, and/or treatment), (619) 609-3245 (clinical consultations for challenging cases); Fax: (619) 692-8541

E-mail: cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov

Secure Website: <http://cahan.ca.gov>

Public Website: <http://www.cahansandiego.com>