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For Immediate Release:

Oct. 11, 2022

Missoula Public Health Announces First Probable Case of MPX in Missoula County

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and Missoula Public Health (MPH) confirmed a single probable case of monkeypox virus (MPX) in a Missoula County adult. Initial testing was completed on Oct. 7. Missoula Public Health is performing contact tracing and will communicate with individuals identified as a close contact. To protect patient confidentiality, no further details related to the patient will be disclosed.

Missoula Public Health Officer D'Shane Barnett said, "MPX is still actively spreading in the United States. Individuals who are most at risk are encouraged to get vaccinated, take precautions, and screen potential partners for symptoms. Anyone experiencing MPX-like symptoms should contact their healthcare provider immediately."

MPX vaccine eligibility can be found on missoulainfo.com. Individuals can be screened for eligibility and get vaccine appointments by calling 406-258-3896.

As of Oct. 7, 2022, CDC reports 26,577 cases of MPX/orthopoxvirus nationwide. In recent months, more than 71,096 cases have been reported in 100 countries where the disease is not typically reported.

Symptoms of MPX can include fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, exhaustion, and a rash that can look like pimples or blisters that appear on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks and most people get better on their own without treatment. At times, MPX can cause scars from the sores, the development of secondary infections, such as pneumonia, or other complications. The virus does not easily spread between people with casual contact, but transmission can occur through contact with infectious sores and body fluids; contaminated items, such as clothing or bedding; or through respiratory droplets associated with prolonged face-to-face contact. Because MPX transmission requires close and prolonged contact, close-knit social networks have been particularly impacted.

Individuals who believe they may have been exposed to MPX or have the characteristic rash or other symptoms, should contact their health care provider. There is no treatment specifically for MPX. However, because MPX and smallpox viruses are closely related, antiviral drugs (such as tecovirimat) and vaccines developed to protect against smallpox may be used to prevent and treat MPX virus infections. The need for treatment will depend on how sick someone gets or whether they are likely to get severely ill. DPHHS has pre-positioned a supply of tecovirimat in the state for use, if necessary.

CDC does not recommend widespread vaccination against MPX at this time. Missoula Public Health and DPHHS will follow CDC vaccination recommendations for MPX vaccination and expanded criteria which may be recommended for the following individuals as of Oct. 11, 2022: Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP):

- Adults 18 years* and older who have had exposure to individuals with confirmed orthopoxvirus/MPX virus infection.

Post-exposure prophylaxis ++ (PEP++):

- Adults 18 years* and older who have had multiple sexual partners in the past 14 days in a jurisdiction with known MPX
- This may include:
 - Known contacts who are identified by public health via case investigation, contact tracing, and risk exposure assessments
 - People who are aware that one of their sexual partners from the past 2 weeks has received a MPX diagnosis.
 - Gay, bisexual, other men who have sex with men, and transgender people who report any of the following in the past 2 weeks:
 - Group sex or sex with multiple partners.
 - Sex at a commercial sex venue or in association with an event, venue, or defined geographic area where MPX transmission has been reported.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PREP):

- Adults 18* and older who meet one of the following criteria:
 - Individuals who have recently had multiple or anonymous sexual partners; **OR**
 - Partners of individuals who have had multiple or anonymous sexual partners; **OR**
 - Sex workers; **OR**
 - Staff at establishments where sexual activity occurs (e.g., bathhouses, saunas, sex clubs); **OR**
 - Were diagnosed with gonorrhea or early syphilis within the past 12 months; **OR**
 - Persons experiencing homelessness with high-risk behaviors; **OR**
 - Are on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis; **OR**
 - Are part of high risk cohorts identified by clinical staff in the correctional system; **OR**
 - Individuals deemed to have high-risk based on individual risk assessments.

Persons who meet the criteria above and are immunocompromised or those who have underlying medical conditions that confer increased risk for severe disease (e.g., atopic dermatitis, eczema) should be prioritized for vaccination.

- Certain healthcare and public health response team members designated by public health authorities to be vaccinated for preparedness purposes according to ACIP guidance.

At this time, most clinicians in the U.S. and laboratorians not performing the orthopox generic test to diagnose orthopoxviruses, including MPX virus, are not advised to receive MPX vaccine PrEP

*For individuals under the age of 18 years, Jynneos may be administered under the current EUA as a 2-dose 0.5 mL subcutaneous injection given 28 days apart.

For more information on the symptoms of MPX, prevention and vaccine information, the spread of the disease, and more, please visit missoulainfo.com.

For more information on statewide MPX response, visit the MT DPHHS website. This website has details on treatment and vaccination for MPX.

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The Missoula City-County Health Department's mission is to build conditions that support the health of people, environments, and communities.