



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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Division of Public Health

To: All North Carolina Clinicians

From: Victoria Mobley, MD, MPH
STI/HIV Medical Epidemiologist

Re: Monkeypox and Sexually Transmitted Infections

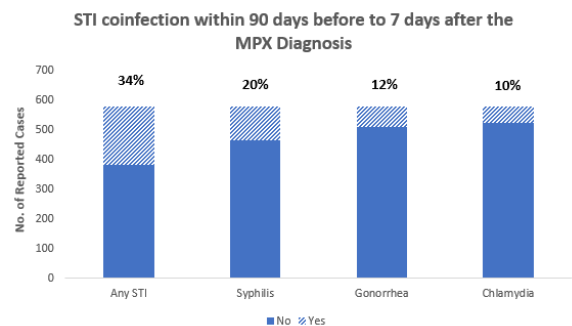
Date: October 24, 2022

This memo is intended to provide an update of North Carolina's monkeypox outbreak including the high incidence of co-occurring sexually transmitted infections (STI) and expansion of the vaccine eligibility criteria.

Clinicians are encouraged to provide monkeypox vaccine to all eligible patients and to consider testing for HIV and other STIs in any patient with suspected or confirmed monkeypox.

Background:

As of October 12, 2022 there were 615 monkeypox cases reported in North Carolina. Cases continue to be predominantly gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women. Although it's important to note that monkeypox can affect anyone, and infectious diseases do not tend to remain confined to any specific sexual or social networks, the main route of transmission in the current outbreak has been through sexual contact.



Consistent with [national reports](#), North Carolina is seeing a significant overlap between monkeypox, HIV, and other STIs. Over half (52%) of North Carolina's monkeypox diagnoses are among persons living with HIV and approximately a third of cases had a recent or concurrent syphilis, gonorrhea, or chlamydia diagnosis. Additional demographic information on monkeypox cases in North Carolina can be found [here](#).

Evaluation and Testing:

The early presentation of monkeypox infection can be confused with other STIs therefore monkeypox should be considered as a part of the differential diagnosis during all sexual health assessments. Additionally, given the [overlapping symptom profile and high coinfection rates](#) seen in

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this outbreak, testing for HIV and other STIs should be prioritized in any patient suspected or confirmed to have monkeypox.

Vaccine

JYNNEOS vaccine is FDA approved for the prevention of monkeypox. Full immunization requires two vaccine doses, administered 28 days apart. Please encourage patients to schedule their second vaccine dose at the time the first dose is given to increase their likelihood of completing the recommended two-dose series. North Carolina's vaccine eligibility criteria have recently been expanded to include the below new criteria in red:

1. Anyone who had close contact in the past two weeks with someone who has been diagnosed with monkeypox; or
2. Gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men, or transgender individuals, who are sexually active; or
3. People who have had sexual contact with gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men, or transgender individuals in the past 90 days; or
4. People living with HIV, or taking medication to prevent HIV (PrEP), or who were diagnosed with syphilis in the past 90 days; or
5. **People who have had any of the following in the past 6 months:**
 - **Sex at a commercial sex venue; or**
 - **Sex in association with a large public event; or**
 - **Sexual partners of people with the above risks; or**
 - **People who anticipate experiencing the above risks**

Information for the public about vaccine eligibility and access is available [here](#).

The current list of North Carolina JYNNEOS providers is available [here](#). Providers interested in receiving and administering JYNNEOS vaccines must enroll and agree to the terms of the program. Providers not currently enrolled should complete the [Monkeypox Vaccine Enrollment and Capacity Survey](#) to get started.

A toolkit with educational materials to help our communities better understand monkeypox is available at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/monkeypox/monkeypox-communications-toolkit>.

Cases must be reported to your [local public health department](#) or NCDPH within 24 hours per the [NC State Administrative Code](#).

Please contact the N.C. Communicable Disease Branch with any question or concerns, (919)-733-3419.