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News release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Kenosha County Public Health providing MPV vaccinations to eligible populations**

Kenosha County Public Health is one of 17 approved MPV (monkeypox) vaccination providers in Wisconsin that are currently accepting appointments from the public, Health Officer Dr. Jen Freiheit announced today.

KCPH has received a limited supply of vaccine from the state and now only has the ability to vaccinate the most at-risk individuals, Freiheit said. Therefore, KCPH is partnering with key community stakeholders to target the current vaccine to these high-risk populations.

These partners include the LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, Vivent Health and Kenosha Pride.

“With a limited supply of vaccine at this time, we are following federal and state guidance and working to direct doses to populations believed to be at the highest risk for infection, and to close contacts of confirmed cases,” Freiheit said. “As vaccine availability increases and we learn more about this evolving situation, we look forward to sharing more information with the public.”

A vaccination clinic, open to eligible individuals, will operate from 3 to 7 p.m. today — Thursday, Sept. 8 — at the Kenosha County Job Center, 8600 Sheridan Road, Entrance B on the north side of the building.

A list of current vaccine eligibility criteria, as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, is at the conclusion of this release.

Commonly known as monkeypox, MPV is a rare disease caused by infection with MPV (the monkeypox virus). Amid a growing outbreak in the United States and globally, the White House declared MPV a national public health emergency on Aug. 4.

As of Wednesday, Sept. 7, there were 21,274 confirmed MPV cases nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Wisconsin, there were 63 confirmed cases, including two in Kenosha County.

The virus is spread by skin-to-skin contact with an infected individual, contact with contaminated clothes or linen, and through saliva droplets if lesions are in the mouth.

The highest rate of current cases has been in men and trans women who have sex with men, however, any person, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, can acquire and spread MPV. Prolonged close contact, face-to-face contact, or intimate physical contact with an infected person puts people at greater risk of infection.

Freiheit said it is important to receive and understand accurate information as it pertains to MPV. Communicable diseases can show up in all communities, and anyone is at risk of contracting MPV if they are in close contact with an individual who is infected.

While MPV is not a sexually transmitted disease, it appears to be transmitted at a higher rate through sex, which has a high rate of skin-to-skin contact. Any skin-to-skin contact with someone with MPV can lead to possible new cases of MPV.

Common symptoms of MPV can include fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, and a rash that can look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy. The rash may be on the face, the inside of the mouth, hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus. Symptoms are usually mild or moderate and a person is no longer infectious when their lesions have fallen off. MPV is rarely fatal.

Most people recover in two to four weeks without need for treatment, although vaccinations and antiviral medications can be used to prevent and treat MPV. Because of the current short supply of vaccine, the CDC requires a HIPPA-compliant screening tool when people inquire about vaccination eligibility.

More information about MPV is available from the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html> and from the Wisconsin Department of Health at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>.

### **Current MPV vaccination eligibility guidelines**

Wisconsinites who meet any of the following criteria can get vaccinated:

- Known contacts who are identified by public health through case investigation, contact tracing, and risk exposure assessments.
- Presumed contacts who may meet the following criteria:
  - People who know that a sexual partner in the past 14 days was diagnosed with monkeypox.

- People who attended an event or venue where there was known monkeypox exposure.
- Gay men, bisexual men, trans men and women, any men who have sex with men, and gender non-conforming/non-binary people who have had multiple sexual partners in the last 14 days.
- People considered to have an elevated risk of exposure to monkeypox in the future:
  - Gay men, bisexual men, trans men and women, any men who have sex with men, and gender non-conforming/non-binary people who expect to have multiple or anonymous sex partners. This may include people living with HIV and people who take HIV pre-exposure because of increased risk of sexually transmitted infections.
  - Clinical laboratory personnel who perform testing to diagnose orthopoxviruses, including those who use polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assays for diagnosis of orthopoxviruses, including monkeypox virus.
  - Research laboratory workers who directly handle cultures or animals contaminated or infected with orthopoxviruses that infect humans, including monkeypox virus, replication-competent vaccinia virus, or recombinant vaccinia viruses derived from replication-competent vaccinia virus strains.
  - Certain health care providers working in sexual health clinics or other specialty settings directly caring for patients with sexually transmitted infections.

In addition to eligible people getting vaccinated, the Wisconsin Department of Health advises everyone should avoid having close skin-to-skin contact with others who have new or unexplained rash. For those without a provider, help is available by dialing 211 or 877-947-2211, or texting your ZIP code to 898-211.

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