CAHAN SD
California Health Alert Network San Diego

To: **CAHAN San Diego Participants**
Date: **November 13, 2026**
From: **Public Health Services**

Health Advisory Update #6: Mpox Case Increase and Community Spread of Clade I Mpox

Key Messages

- Mpox cases have increased in San Diego County for the last month, and additional clade Ib mpox cases have been reported.
- Confirmed clade Ib mpox cases include cases without reported history of international travel. This and similar reports elsewhere in California and the United States suggest community spread of clade I mpox virus (MPXV).
- Providers should continue to have a high index of suspicion for mpox for patients who are sexually active and present with rash, skin lesion(s), and proctitis, regardless of previous history of mpox or vaccination status.
- The two-dose JYNNEOS vaccine is the best tool to reduce risk of mpox infection and prevent severe disease from either clade. For people who have completed the two-dose series, no additional doses are recommended.

Situation

Reported cases of mpox have increased by 20% over the last two consecutive weeks for which case data are available, and one third of the 48 cases reported to date in 2026 have occurred since October 1, 2026. While most of the mpox cases reported in 2026 have been due to clade IIb (26 of the 37 cases for which clade is known), clade Ib mpox virus (MPXV) has accounted for an increasing proportion of local cases since the first local clade Ib mpox case was confirmed in a returning traveler on August 5, 2026. To date, there have been 10 confirmed clade Ib mpox cases in San Diego County. Of the 44 mpox cases reported in 2026 as of November 7, 2026 for which vaccination status is known, 30 (68%) were unvaccinated, 11 (25%) were fully vaccinated, and 3 (7%) were partially vaccinated. There have been 5 mpox-related hospitalizations and no deaths in 2026. While mpox can affect anyone, gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) continue to account for the majority of cases in 2026 (42 or 91% of cases for which data regarding sexual orientation are available).

Background

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), there has been a recent increase in clade Ib mpox cases in California and the United States, and recent public health data suggest a likely transition toward sustained community transmission of clade I mpox within California and the U.S. Additional cases of both travel-related and domestically acquired cases of clade Ib mpox are expected. Clade IIb mpox cases also continue to occur. At this time, clade Ib mpox disease severity and transmission dynamics are appearing largely similar to clade IIb mpox. Risk for severe disease from either clade of MPXV is highest for people who are immunocompromised. Vaccination with two doses of JYNNEOS vaccine remains the best tool to reduce risk of infection and prevent severe disease from either clade of mpox. Maximal protection is achieved approximately two weeks after completion of the series. Based on current data, no additional vaccine dose (i.e., booster dose) is recommended for those who have completed the two-dose series.

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Actions Requested

1. ***Consider and test*** for mpox in patients who present with suggestive signs and symptoms, regardless of previous vaccination against mpox or previous mpox disease.
    - Any positive orthopoxvirus (OPXV), non-variola orthopoxvirus (NVO), or monkeypox virus (MPXV) result is sufficient for a diagnosis of mpox. Do not await confirmatory or clade-specific testing.
    - Most commercial testing for mpox is done via nonspecific assays (e.g., OPXV, NVO) and/or assays specific to clade II MPXV. A common result pairing is positive orthopoxvirus (+OPXV or +NVO) with a negative clade II MPXV. This combination is indicative of clade I mpox.
2. ***Ensure*** infection control measures are in place for all suspected clade I and II mpox cases at the time of clinical care delivery, including appropriate source control (e.g., covering of lesions with clothing or bandages, well-fitted face mask) and use of full personal protective equipment (PPE) when evaluating someone with mpox symptoms.
3. ***Vaccinate*** individuals who are vulnerable to acquiring mpox as a part of routine sexual healthcare. Boosters (third doses) are not recommended currently. CDPH recommends the two-dose JYNNEOS vaccine for anyone who:
    - Is gay, bisexual, or other MSM or
    - Is transgender, nonbinary, or gender-diverse or
    - Has HIV, or is taking/eligible for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) or doxycycline for sexually transmitted infection post-exposure prophylaxis (doxy-PEP) or
    - Was exposed to someone with mpox in the last 14 days or
    - Is planning travel internationally (outside of the U.S.), particularly to a country where clade I mpox is spreading between people, and anticipates sexual contact or intimate contact while traveling or
    - Anticipates attending a commercial sex event or venue (like a sex club or bathhouse) or
    - Has a sex partner with any of the above risks or
    - Requests mpox vaccination, even if they have not disclosed any risks listed above.
4. ***Treat*** patients who have or are at risk for severe/complicated mpox disease with antiviral therapy based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Ensure appropriate pain control for all patients with mpox. Clade determination does not impact clinical management of mpox or plan of care.
5. ***Advise*** patients with mpox to continue isolation and extra household precautions until all lesions have healed.
6. ***Submit*** specimens from all positive mpox cases to San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (SDCPHL) for clade-specific MPXV testing and confirmation. ***Prior to sending a specimen contact*** SDCPHL at (858) 325-6400 during business hours and (619) 666-8889 for after hours. Complete the online fillable Test Requisition Form (sandiegocounty.gov) for sample submission.
7. ***Report*** probable, suspected, and confirmed mpox 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).

Resources

National

- Clade I Mpox Outbreaks | CDC
- Mpox in the United States and Around the World: Current Situation | CDC

State

- Mpox Guidance | CDPH (includes links to mpox-related health advisories and updates)
- Mpox Vaccination | CDPH
- Mpox Clinical Recognition and Testing Quicksheet and Overview | California Prevention Training Center

County

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- Health Advisory: Clade I Mpox Virus in Travelers to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (December 15, 2023)
- Health Advisory Update #2: Clade I Mpox Human-to-Human Transmission and Geographical Spread in Africa (August 15, 2024)
- Health Advisory Update #3: First Case of Clade I Mpox Diagnosed in California and the United States in a Returning Traveler (November 22, 2024)
- Health Advisory Update #4: Community Spread of Clade I Mpox in Southern California
- Health Advisory Update #5: First Confirmed Clade I Mpox Case in San Diego County in Returning Traveler
- Mpox in San Diego County

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: https://www.cahan.ca.gov
Public Website: http://sandiegocounty.gov/cahan

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