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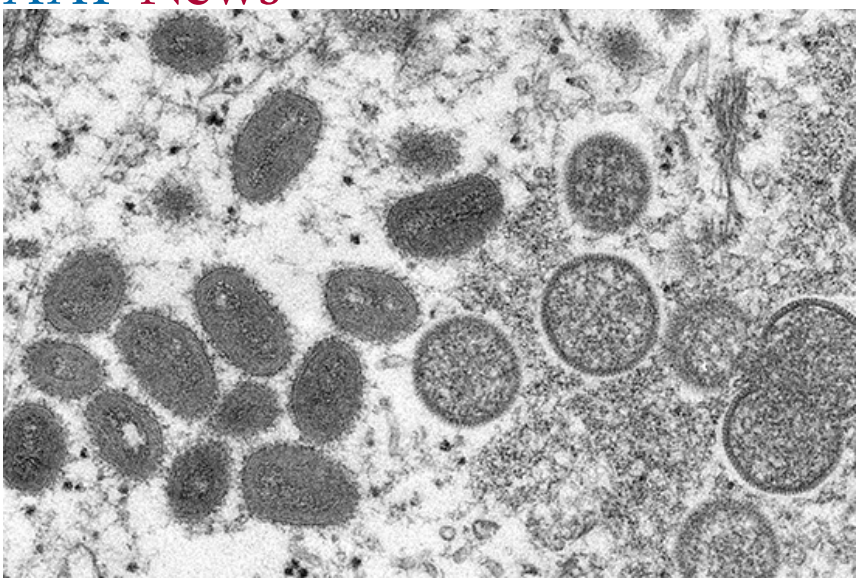

U.S. declares monkeypox a public health emergency

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U.S. health officials have declared monkeypox to be a public health emergency and are considering a change in vaccine dosing to address supply limitations.

“We’re prepared to take response to the next level in addressing this virus, and we urge every American to take monkeypox seriously and to take responsibility to help us tackle this virus,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, J.D., said in a press briefing Thursday.

The declaration comes nearly two weeks after the World Health Organization director general declared monkeypox to be a public health emergency of international concern. Health officials said Thursday the emergency declaration in the U.S. will allow them to ramp up their efforts to deploy personnel, make vaccines and treatments more widely available, improve data collection, educate the public, and raise awareness of the outbreak.

“We plan to be responsive leaders, focusing on tackling this with the urgency this moment warrants, and today the key actions we are announcing will allow us to further accelerate these efforts,” said Robert Fenton, White House national monkeypox response coordinator.

There are more than 6,600 monkeypox cases in the U.S., a figure that is rising rapidly. While the outbreak has largely impacted men who have sex with men, it is not exclusively a sexually transmitted disease, and several children have been infected. Earlier today, the AAP released answers to pediatricians’ frequently asked questions about monkeypox, covering topics like prevention, symptoms, testing and treatment.

Health officials have ramped up testing capacity to 80,000 tests per week across commercial and government labs and deployed about 14,000 tecovirimat (TPOXX) treatments. They also have delivered more than 600,000 doses of the JYNNEOS vaccine to states and territories with more on the way in the coming weeks and months as demand continues to grow.

“In recent days, it’s become clear to all of us that given the continued spread of the virus, we’re at a critical inflection point dictating the need for additional solutions to address the rise in infection rates,” said Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Robert Califf, M.D.

The FDA is exploring the possibility of a change in JYNNEOS dosing that would use one-fifth of the regular amount and be administered intradermally instead of subcutaneously. It is expected to make a decision on this approach in the next few days.

“There’s some advantages to intradermal administration, including an improved immune response to the vaccine,” Dr. Califf said. “It’s important to know that overall safety and efficacy profile will not be sacrificed with this approach.”

Resources

- CDC Clinical Considerations for Monkeypox in Children and Adolescents
- *AAP News* story “AAP experts answer pediatricians’ questions on monkeypox”
- Red Book Online Outbreak: Monkeypox Virus Outbreak
- Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on monkeypox