

## **MPOX HEALTH ALERT: RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

The World Health Organization has declared monkeypox (mpox) a Global Health Emergency.<sup>1</sup> Mpox is a contagious disease and is part of the same family as the virus that causes smallpox. People with mpox can experience painful scarring rashes, fever, muscle aches, headaches, and respiratory symptoms. The infection is especially dangerous in people with compromised immune systems. People infected with mpox might have flu-like symptoms and a rash that goes through several stages, including scabbing, before healing. Mpox is a zoonotic disease unrelated to chickenpox that can spread between animals and humans.<sup>2</sup>

The CDC has urged healthcare providers to consider mpox if they see patients with compatible symptoms.<sup>3</sup> Mpox, like other infectious diseases, can spread more easily in congregate living facilities, where people live in close quarters and share common spaces, such as but not limited to:

- **Correctional and detention facilities**
- Shelters (homeless, emergency, domestic violence)
- Group homes
- Residential treatment facilities

### **Action steps and infection mitigation considerations for the Corrections Director, Warden, or Undersheriff:**

#### **1. Communicate with Staff and Residents:**

- Provide clear, fact-based information about mpox prevention.
- Emphasize the risk of transmission through close physical contact, including sexual activity.
- Share prevention guidelines and avoid stigmatization in messaging.
- Review the [WHO Fact Sheet on Mpox](#).

#### **2. Response to Identified Cases:**

- Ensure that staff and residents with suspected mpox are immediately identified, assessed, tested, and evaluated and receive immediate medical care.
- Isolate staff members with mpox until they are fully recovered.
- Ensure that residents with mpox are isolated from others until their rash has fully healed, which may take 2-4 weeks.
- Consult CDC guidelines for isolation recommendations and communicate with your local health departments before ending isolation.

#### **3. Reducing Spread:**

- Limit access to isolation areas to essential staff only.
- Ensure that residents who are not in isolation do not enter isolation areas.
- Review the resource: CDC: [Isolation Precautions](#)

#### 4. Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Residents with mpox should help clean and disinfect their isolation spaces regularly to limit contamination.
- Identify dedicated laundry space for residents in isolation.
- Review the resources:
  - [CDC - Considerations for Reducing Mpox in Congregate Living Settings](#)
  - [CDC - Cleaning and Disinfecting Recommendations](#)

#### 5. Waste Management:

- Continue routine waste management procedures, following state and local waste handling, storage, treatment, and disposal regulations.
- Individuals with mpox should use a dedicated, lined trash can in their isolation room. Place gloves, bandages, and other disposable items that have been in contact with the skin in a sealed plastic bag before discarding them in the dedicated trash can.
- Use gloves when handling garbage bags or disposing of trash from isolation areas.

#### 6. Identification and Monitoring:

- Communicate with state and local health departments to identify and monitor the health of any staff or residents who might have had close contact with someone who has Mpox. Contact tracing can help prevent additional cases.

#### 7. Exposure Protocols and Controls:

- Ensure access to handwashing facilities. Soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol should always be available. Anyone who touches the rash or items like clothing, linens, or surfaces that may have had contact with the rash should wash their hands immediately.

#### 8. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Training Resources:

- Staff entering isolation areas should wear PPE, including a gown, gloves, eye protection, and a NIOSH-approved particulate respirator with N95 filters or higher.
- Utilize the training resources available at no cost from the New Jersey Counties Excess Joint Insurance Fund (NJCE):

- [Live Instructor-Led Class:](#)

- Bloodborne Pathogen Administrator Training
- Hazard Communication Globally Harmonized Systems (GHS)
- Indoor Air Quality Designated Person Training
- Wellness for Government Employees

The Live Instructor Course Scheduled can be viewed [here](#).

- NJCE Learning on Demand:

- Review the NJCE Learning on Demand Catalog [here](#), which includes numerous courses concerning bloodborne pathogens, personal protective equipment, hazardous materials, and more.

- Review the resource: [CDC/NIOSH Guidelines for Reducing Viral Surface Contamination in Correctional Facilities.](#)
- Review additional training resources:
  - [CDC Training Video -Fight Germs, Wash Your Hands!](#)
  - [CDC Training Video on Handwashing](#)

Following these steps can help corrections staff prevent the spread of mpox in high-risk settings.

If you have any questions, please contact your Corrections Risk Control Consultant.

<sup>1</sup>World Health Organization. (2024, August). *WHO Director-General Declares Mpox Outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern*. Retrieved from World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news/item/14-08-2024-who-director-general-declares-mpox-outbreak-a-public-health-emergency-of-international-concern>

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Centers for Disease Control. (2024, April 18). *U.S. Centers for Disease Control*. Retrieved from About Mpox: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/about/index.html#:~:text=Mpox%20is%20a%20zoonotic%20disease,that%20live%20in%20these%20areas>

<sup>3</sup>Center for Disease Control. (2024, August 26). *Information for Healthcare Professionals*. Retrieved from Center for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/clinicians/index.html>