



Department of Health

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

MARY T. BASSETT, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

KRISTIN M. PROUD
Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner

July 28, 2022

Re: Declaration of an Imminent Threat to Public Health for monkeypox virus

Dear Local Health Department Commissioner/Public Health Director:

Monkeypox is a historically uncommon zoonotic disease of the orthopoxvirus family that is caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. It is rarely found in the United States. However, since May 14, 2022, numerous people diagnosed with monkeypox have been reported in several countries including the United States. The outbreak of monkeypox virus is nationwide and is rapidly spreading through New York State.

Symptoms of monkeypox can include flu-like symptoms and a rash. The rash can appear like pimples or blisters often in mucosal areas such as the mouth and anogenital or rectal areas which may remain limited to these areas or even spread to the face, torso, or extremities. Lesions typically last two to four weeks. There can be a significant amount of pain associated with symptoms. Pain may interfere with basic functions such as eating, urination, and defecation which can cause distress and compound problems for the patient.

The most common way individuals spread monkeypox is through direct contact with infectious rash, scabs, and/or body fluids. Although this is NOT considered a sexually transmitted infection, monkeypox can spread through respiratory secretions during face-to-face contact or during intimate physical contact between individuals. Anyone can get monkeypox, but certain populations are being affected during this outbreak, including gay/bisexual men, other men who have sex with men, and transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.

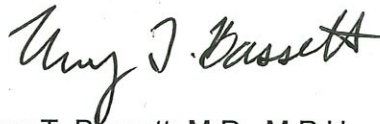
Local health departments (LHDs) are actively responding to the outbreak through case investigation support, contact identification and monitoring, vaccine administration for exposed contacts and focused current high-risk populations, and education and outreach.

Due to the ongoing spread of this virus, coupled with the at-risk population that is primarily impacted by transmission and the significant risk that monkeypox virus poses to human health, I have determined that an Imminent Threat to Public Health (ITPH) exists throughout New York State, pursuant to Public Health Law § 621.

Accordingly, LHDs should continue to work closely with the Office of Public Health Practice (OPHP) to establish the eligibility of costs for reimbursement consistent with Public Health Law and the process to claim reimbursement for monkeypox virus activities during the period of the declaration, which is June 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022. These funds will be made available only after all federal and state as well as other forms of aid that might become available have been expended.

Any questions should be directed to Loretta Santilli, Director of OPHP, at (518) 473-4223. Thank you for our partnership to advance the health of New York State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary T. Bassett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Mary T. Bassett, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner of Health