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Winnebago County Health Department Confirms First Case of Monkeypox

OSHKOSH, Wis. (August 8, 2022) – On August 8, 2022, the Winnebago County Health Department confirmed the first case of monkeypox in a Winnebago County resident. The individual is currently in isolation and working with the health department to identify anyone who may have been exposed to the virus.

"While the risk to the public remains low at this time, it's important for everyone to know the symptoms and seek medical care if exposed or showing signs of monkeypox. Treatment options are available," said Doug Gieryn, Winnebago County Health Department Health Officer/Director. "We can help prevent the outbreak from getting worse if we take the steps now to stay safe and prevent spread of the disease."

Monkeypox is not typically fatal but it can be very painful and cause scarring. The disease is often characterized by new, unexplained rash and skin lesions in the genital, groin and anal regions, which might be confused with rashes caused by sexually transmitted diseases such as herpes or syphilis. Other early symptoms of monkeypox include fever, chills and swollen lymph nodes.

The overall risk to the public remains low. Typically, people become infected with monkeypox by having direct contact with the skin lesions, scabs or body fluids of an infected person; through prolonged face-to-face exposure to respiratory secretions or during intimate physical contact; or through touching items such as clothing that previously touched the infectious rash. While anyone can develop and spread monkeypox after being exposed to the virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that nearly all cases of monkeypox in the U.S. have occurred among gay, bisexual, trans, and other men who have sex with men.

Most people with monkeypox recover in two to four weeks without needing treatment. However, vaccinations and antiviral medications can be used to help prevent and treat monkeypox. If you have been exposed to monkeypox, talk with your health care provider about the vaccine. If you do not have a regular source of health care, confidential support finding health care and community resources near you is available by dialing 211 or 877-947-2211, or texting your ZIP code to 898-211. Online resources are available at 211Wisconsin.org.

To prevent the spread of monkeypox, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services encourages all Wisconsinites to:

- Know the symptoms and risk factors of monkeypox. Anyone with a rash that looks like monkeypox should talk to a health care provider about whether they need to get tested, even if they don't think they had contact with someone who has monkeypox.
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with people who are showing a rash or skin sores. Don't touch the rash or scabs, and don't kiss, hug, cuddle, have sex, or share items such as eating utensils or bedding with someone with monkeypox.
- In locations where monkeypox is spreading, participating in activities with close, personal, skin-to-skin contact may pose a higher risk of exposure.
- If you were recently exposed to the virus, contact a doctor to talk about treatment and vaccine options to help reduce symptoms or onset of the disease. Monitor your health for fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes and a new, unexplained rash, and contact a healthcare provider if any of those occur. If you become ill, avoid contact with others until you receive health care.
- If you are sick with monkeypox, isolate at home until the rash has fully resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed. If you need support to remain in isolation, call the health department.

For more information, call the Winnebago County Health Department at 920-232-3026 or visit www.winnebagopublichealth.org.

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