

Monkeypox and COVID-19 Health System Updates

August 8, 2022, Monday

While COVID-19 continues to affect our community, today I want to talk about a different disease: monkeypox.

New York City—including our Health System—has seen a sharp increase in monkeypox cases recently. The vast majority of these patients have been seen at our outpatient practices, urgent cares, and Emergency Departments, and very few require hospital admission. Monkeypox is almost never fatal, but it can cause excruciating pain, and I know many of you want to know how this affects you as individuals and as care providers.

To help address this, we have launched a [Monkeypox Staff Resources page](#) on our website. It is similar to the [COVID-19 Staff Resources page](#) you are all familiar with. Currently, we don't expect monkeypox to have anywhere as big an effect on our Health System as COVID-19. But on this page you can find the latest information and links, including tips on PPE usage and instructions from Employee Health Services about what to do if you think you've been exposed.

Bernard Camins, MD, our Medical Director for Infection Prevention, has been on top of this outbreak since it started. He wants to assure everyone that health care workers are not at risk of becoming infected with monkeypox while providing care if they consider the diagnosis and wear the appropriate PPE. Monkeypox is not as transmissible as COVID-19. Most transmission occurs as a result of skin-to-skin contact with infectious lesions. If you wear an N95 respirator, eye protection, gown, and gloves when you care for patients with suspected or confirmed monkeypox, you will avoid any high-risk exposures.

To date, monkeypox has disproportionately affected those who identify as gay, bisexual, or as a man who has sex with men. We are partnering with our public health

authorities and our clinicians to provide information regarding monkeypox prevention and access to treatment and vaccination.

Mount Sinai is partnering with the [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#) to be able to offer vaccine to our patients and those in our community who are eligible for expanded post-exposure prophylaxis, and we hope to let you know more very soon.

As for COVID-19, things remain stable. As of this morning we had 154 inpatients with COVID-19 across the system, 15 of whom were in critical care. A majority of these patients continue to be “incidental” cases—in other words, they came here for another condition and happened to test positive upon arrival.

I know that another major disease outbreak is the last thing you wanted to have happen right now. But thanks to your hard work over the last two years, we have a lot of operational plans and templates that we can quickly adapt to address monkeypox.

With all the expertise we’ve developed, we will help our colleagues and our communities get through this as we have so many times before. It remains the honor of my life to wear the Mount Sinai badge by your side.

Vicki R. LoPachin, MD, MBA
Senior Vice President
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