

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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Department calls for vigilance, transparency to curb spread of Mpox

Pretoria: The Department of Health appeals to members of the public who have been in close contact with known or suspected patient(s) of Mpox disease to cooperate with health officials and present at the nearest health facility or healthcare provider without delays for clinical evaluation to ensure early diagnosis and effective treatment if they test positive.

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) has informed the department of two more positive cases of Mpox this week, both confirmed from the local health facilities (Addington and St Augustine Hospitals) in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The preliminary case finding report has revealed that the two recent cases had contact with the other previously confirmed case in the province, and this suggests that there is a local transmission of the disease which could potentially lead to larger outbreaks in the province. This brings the total number of laboratory-confirmed cases in the country to four (three in KwaZulu-Natal and one in Gauteng); all of them are South African males of mid and late 30s.

Mpox virus is transmitted from one person to another by close contact with lesions, sexual contact, body fluids, respiratory droplets and contaminated materials such as bedding. The incubation period of mpox is usually from 6 to 13 days but can range from 5 to 21 days. The health officials rely on transparency and cooperation from cases/patients for contact tracing and case finding in order to determine the rate of transmission of this infectious virus at community level.

The Department would like to applaud the patients, whose honesty and courage during the investigation process, assisted officials to trace suspected cases. Thus, it is through transparency of both confirmed and suspected cases that the government can prevent further transmission and avoidable deaths.

The Department, in collaboration with various stakeholders in the sector, is intensifying epidemiology, surveillance, and Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities. These will also help to address social stigma which contributes to people's decision not to openly speak out because they suspect communities will not accept them due to their health conditions. In most cases, stigma contributes to the spread of the virus thereby making the outbreak and transmission worse.

Some of the common symptoms of Mpox include a rash which may last for 2–4 weeks, fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy and swollen glands (lymph nodes). The painful rash looks like blisters or sores, and can affect the face, palms of the hands, soles of the feet, groin, genital and/or anal regions.

However, there is no need for public to panic because the situation remains under control, and the department will keep the public informed of the situation. For more information about Mpox click [here](#).

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