DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NO.2

Alcona County
311 Lake St. P.O. Box 218
Harrisville, MI 48740
Tel: 989-724-6757

Iosco County
420 W. Lake St P.O. Box 98
Tawas City, MI 48764
Tel: 989-362-6183

Ogemaw County
630 Progress St
West Branch, MI 48661
Tel: 989-345-5020

Oscoda County
393 S. Mt. Tom Rd
Mio, MI 48647
Tel: 989-826-3970

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Media Contact: Scott Izzo
Phone: 989-343-1808

Monkeypox Virus Identified in Ogemaw County

District Health Department No. 2 (DHD2) has been notified by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) of an individual identified with the Monkeypox virus (MPV) in Ogemaw County. This individual had been visiting the area, and all contacts have been identified.

Currently, there are 16,926 identified cases of MPV in the United States and 157 identified cases of MPV in Michigan. Men who have sex with men make up most cases in the outbreak; however, anyone regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity who has close, personal contact with someone who has MPV can develop the disease. Children and those who are immunocompromised are often more at risk of severe illness compared to the general population.

The most noteworthy symptom of MPV is rash. This rash can appear like pimples or blisters and may be itchy or painful. These rashes will go through several stages, including scabbing, and are often led by several days of flu-like symptoms. Rash may occur on an affected individual's hands, feet, chest, face, mouth, genitals, or anus. Other symptoms of MPV infection include fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, muscle/back aches, headache, and respiratory symptoms (such as sore throat, nasal congestion, cough, etc.)

MPV is primarily spread via close personal contact. This includes direct contact with rashes or scabs (skin-to-skin or bodily fluids), touching personal objects that have been used by a person with MPV, or contact with respiratory secretions (such as during face-to-face contact). Sexual or intimate contact is one way in which MPV can spread, but any close, sustained skin-to-skin contact with an infected individual can spread the virus. A person with MPV can spread the disease to others from the time that symptoms start until the rash has fully healed, typically around 2-4 weeks.

Antiviral drugs may be recommended for those patients who are at risk of experiencing severe illness. Vaccination is currently recommended for those who have been exposed to MPV and those who are more likely to contract MPV.

A few things residents can do to protect themselves and their loved ones from MPV include:

- **Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that could be MPV.** Do not kiss, hug, cuddle, or have sex with someone who has MPV.
- **Avoid contact with objects and materials that a person with MPV has used.** This includes eating utensils, towels, bedding, and clothing.
- **Wash your hands often.** Use soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- **Seek medical attention and testing if you suspect that you or a loved one has MPV**, or if you have symptoms of MPV.

As the weather gets cooler and the new school year starts, it will be important for residents to remember that those who experience prolonged skin-to-skin contact in the community may be at a higher risk for exposure to MPV. Healthcare workers, caregivers, parents and guardians of children in schools, and those that play contact sports should be aware of the risks of MPV and what to do if they suspect an infection.

DHD2 currently has a limited amount of MPV vaccine and is working on securing more with the intention of expanding eligibility when possible. Please visit dhd2.org or call 1-800-504-2650 for the latest updates from the local health department. For more information on MPV and what to do if you are exposed or infected, please visit Michigan.gov/MPV or cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html.