Instructions for Submission of Specimens for Monkeypox Testing to the New York City Public Health Laboratory

June 10, 2022

NOTE: Specimens will ONLY be accepted for testing with prior approval from the NYC Health Department

Health care providers wanting to order testing for Monkeypox virus at the NYC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) must follow these instructions

I. Report suspect cases to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department)
   i. Individuals who meet any of the epidemiological criteria and have a new, unexplained rash should be considered for monkeypox testing pending consultation and review with the NYC Health Department.
   ii. If monkeypox is a clinical consideration, call the NYC Health Department provider access line at 866-692-3641 for case discussion and review.

II. Specimen collection, storage, and transport instructions
   i. If the NYC Health Department may recommend testing for monkeypox. Testing is only performed by PHL. Specimens should be collected by the provider and transported to PHL for testing.
   ii. Ensure proper infection control practices and procedures when performing specimen collection. See current CDC Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) recommendations at https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control-healthcare.html
   iii. Materials Needed:
        1. Four Dry Swabs: sterile nylon, polyester, or Dacron swab (e.g., Eswab). Do not add or store the swabs in viral or universal transport media.
        2. Four separate (individual) sterile containers for each swab (without liquid or transport media).
   iv. Specimen Collection:
        1. IDENTIFY TWO (2) LESIONS ONLY per patient to sample, preferably from different locations on the body and/or with differencing appearances. (A total of four swabs should be collected).
        2. COLLECT THE SAMPLE using the sterile swab, by scrubbing the base of the lesion vigorously enough to ensure that cells from the lesion are collected.
        3. STORAGE CONTAINERS - Place each swab (break off stick if necessary) in its own sterile container (i.e., conical tube or urine cup). (Reminder, do not add or store in viral or universal transport media.)
        4. eORDER - Each lesion site that is sampled requires a separate eOrder test requisition to be completed (e.g., hand, face, etc.). If two (2) lesions are sampled, two (2) eOrders should be submitted. See instructions below
        5. LABEL each container with a swab and test requisition with:
               a. Patient first and last name;
b. At least one identifier: date of birth, medical record number, or referring lab accession number; and
c. The lesion collection site (i.e., face, neck, left hand, etc.).
d. Please note that the patient first and last name and identifier on the specimen container and the eOrder test requisition must match to prevent any delays in testing.

v. Specimen Storage:
1. Within one hour of collection, keep specimens refrigerated at 2–8°C or frozen at -20°C or below while awaiting transport to PHL.
   a. If refrigerated, specimens can be stored at 2–8°C for up to 7 days. Refrigerated specimens should be sent to PHL within 5 days of collection to allow testing and shipment to CDC.
   b. If frozen, specimens can be stored at -20°C or below for up to 60 days. Frozen specimens should be sent to PHL within 50 days of collection to allow testing and shipment to CDC.

vi. Specimen Transport:
1. Send specimens using Category B packaging and shipping guidelines.
2. Triple pack the specimens using the following procedure:
   a. Place specimen container in a leakproof primary receptacle (i.e., sealed biohazard bag); multiple primary receptacles should be individually wrapped.
   b. Subsequently, place items in a leakproof secondary receptacle (i.e., sealed bag).
   c. Finally, place items in rigid or strong outer packaging.
   d. Place a list of contents and paperwork (PHL eOrder test requisition) between the secondary receptacle and outer packaging.
   e. Specimens must be kept cold with cold ice packs. Several cold ice packs should be used to ensure specimens remain cold during transport to PHL.
   f. Transport specimens to PHL:
      • Attention: NYC Public Health Laboratory
        Biothreat Response Laboratory
        455 First Avenue
        New York, NY 10016

III. Test ordering instructions
i. Submit an eOrder to PHL
2. Sign in using credentials or register as a new user. See https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/labs/phl-eorder-user-guide.pdf for instructions on creating an account. If you are not registered with eOrder, please contact phleordersupport@health.nyc.gov, ssuleiman@health.nyc.gov, and wcai@health.nyc.gov to register for an account.
3. Fill out required information and add the following to the specified fields:
   a. Test: Clinical Poxvirus
   b. Specimen Container: Swab
   c. Specimen Source: Other
   d. Specimen Source Other: Skin or Lesion + site of lesion swabbed (e.g., Left arm)
   e. Fill in both collection date and collection time fields (required).
f. Each lesion site that is sampled requires its own eOrder requisition to be completed. For example, one eOrder requisition for two swabs from one lesion site.

4. Communicate with your clinical laboratory that specimens are to be delivered to PHL and that an eOrder has been submitted.

IV. Additional Information and Resources

- For access to NYC PHL eOrder:
  - https://a816-phleorder.nyc.gov/PHLeOrder/

- For Category B packaging and shipping from the US Department of Transportation:

- For Laboratory Personnel:
  - https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/lab-personnel/index.html

- For Laboratory Procedures:
  - https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/lab-personnel/lab-procedures.html

V. NYC Public Health Laboratory Contact Information

i. If you have any questions related to monkeypox testing, you may contact the LRN Biothreat Response staff at (212) 671-5834.