

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: 2023 March 16

2022 MPOX OUTBREAK SUMMARY

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 19-23 re: “2022 Mpox Outbreak Summary” be received for information.

Key Points

- A significant Mpox outbreak occurred internationally in 2022, with 15 confirmed cases identified and responded to locally.
- The local Mpox response required extensive collaboration amongst teams at the Health Unit and with external partners in the community – most specifically agencies providing support to men who have sex with men.
- At this time, there is very low transmission in Ontario, with no cases recently reported in Middlesex-London, and procedures have been established to ensure continued coordinated response in the event of new cases being identified.

Background

Mpox is a viral illness that causes a rash or lesions on a person’s body that can be in a single location (e.g., genital area, mouth) or all over the body. Other symptoms that can happen before or after the rash include fever/chills, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, headache, muscle aches, and sore throat ([Public Health Ontario, 2022-10-28](#)). In 2022, there was a worldwide Mpox outbreak with 86,231 confirmed cases, 100 deaths and 110 countries reporting cases ([World Health Organization, 2023-02-28](#)).

Provincially, there were 691 confirmed cases of Mpox as of December 13, 2022. Of these cases, key highlights include:

- The first confirmed case was reported in May 2022.
- 505/691 (73.1%) confirmed cases were reported by Toronto Public Health (see Table 3 for confirmed cases by public health unit).
- 685/691 (99.1%) confirmed cases were male and 6/691 (0.9%) are female.
- The average age of confirmed cases was 36.6 years (range: <20 – 74 years).
- The commonly reported symptoms included rash, oral/genital lesions, swollen lymph nodes, headache, fever, chills, myalgia and fatigue.
- 20/691 (2.9%) of confirmed cases have been hospitalized, and 2/691 (0.3%) have been in the intensive care unit (ICU); no deaths have been reported in Ontario.

At the time of the first reporting of cases in Ontario, there was uncertainty regarding the nature of Mpox transmission and the outbreak was treated with a high degree of caution to protect the community from the spread of the disease. The response to Mpox was coordinated locally between many teams in the Health Unit and with local stakeholders.

Case and Contact Management in Middlesex-London

The first confirmed case of Mpox was reported locally on June 13, 2022. Investigators on the Infectious Disease Control Team were responsible for the intake, investigation, and reporting of all suspect, probable and confirmed cases within the region. From June 13 to November 11, 2022, the team investigated 33 reports of Mpox with 15 confirmed cases, and 18 cases that did not meet case definition.

Across Ontario, most of the cases identified were amongst men who report sexual or intimate contact with other men. Additionally, the most reported risk factor included intimate contact with new and/or more than one partner. Other less common risk factors included travel, being immunocompromised, or having close contact with someone outside of the province.

The Role of the Sexual Health Team

The Sexual Health Team connected with community partners who support the target population to share promotional materials and Mpox vaccine clinic dates and locations. During Pride 2022, Mpox promotional material was displayed at booths as an education opportunity for clients. Clients who attended the sexual health clinic presenting with suspect or probable Mpox were tested, told to isolate immediately and then referred to the Infectious Disease Team for case management.

The Role of the Vaccine Preventable Diseases Team

Mpox vaccine clinics were offered starting in June 2022 at MLHU Citi Plaza site, the Pride London events and in other community venues. By the end of February 2023, 865 first doses and over 90 second doses were administered. With new cases emerging in the Toronto area, there has been a recommendation from the Province to ramp up efforts for clients to receive a second dose. Efforts to connect with clients who require a second dose is now underway including individual reminder calls to clients and the offering of additional vaccination opportunities.

Communications

An Mpox education awareness campaign was launched for one month in August 2022 using social media avenues such as Advances AI Ads, premium display advertising, and targeted dating apps. Posters were developed by the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance, with support from the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection, Middlesex London Health Unit and Southwestern Health Unit, and shared with other community agencies.

Next Steps

The local response to Mpox was highly coordinated across the Health Unit and resulted in the effective control of ongoing transmission. Initial concerns about widespread Mpox transmission have been mitigated due to the engagement of priority populations and community partners. Mpox processes and procedures were created during the initial outbreak and will be reviewed and revised as necessary to respond to the possibility of new cases in the future.

This report was prepared by the Environmental Health and Infectious Disease Division.



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