

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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Public is urged to be vigilant as more mpox cases are detected in Gauteng

Pretoria: The Department of Health urges members of the public to be extra vigilant of mpox symptoms as three more laboratory-confirmed cases of the disease are detected in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng province. The newly detected positive cases include a 38-year old man who presented to the healthcare facility with symptoms of mpox.

The other two confirmed mpox are a 14-year old man and 33-year old woman who are both contacts of the other patient. None of the patients have recent travel history to countries or regions currently experiencing mpox an outbreak, which suggests there is ongoing local transmission of the virus in the country. This also highlights the necessity of rapid and well-coordinated contact-tracing for early detection and effective management of positive cases.

This increases the total cumulative number of positive cases from 28 to 31 cases since the outbreak in May 2024. The number includes six cases recorded since the beginning of this year. The patients are currently self-isolating and receiving appropriate clinical management from the healthcare workers. The Department has activated outbreak response teams in the province for contact tracing and case investigation in the affected areas. Mpox is typically a mild and self-limiting disease with a low case fatality rate. The risk of wider transmission remains low in South Africa, but anyone can contract mpox regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation and race.

Additionally, all three new mpox patients also tested positive for relatively unknown, but common virus called herpes simplex virus (HSV). This is a viral infection that causes painful blisters or ulcers which mainly spreads through skin-to-skin contact including kissing and unprotected sex, hence consistent and correct use of condoms remains the best way to prevent genital herpes and other STIs. The virus is generally asymptomatic, treatable, but not curable. The symptoms include a rash which may last for 2 - 4 weeks, fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy and swollen glands.

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