

Monkeypox declared a public health emergency in the United States

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spread of the virus.

Washington, August 5 (RHC)-- U.S. public health officials have declared the spread of the Monkeypox disease a public health emergency. The declaration will free up additional government resources to help contain the spread of the virus.

As of August 3, more than 6,600 cases of the disease had been confirmed in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"We're prepared to take our response to the next level in addressing this virus, and we urge every American to take Monkeypox seriously," Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra said at a briefing Thursday.

The disease can result in symptoms such as fever, headache, aches, chills, and rashes that can be itchy and painful, but is rarely fatal. There have been no reported deaths in the United States thus far.

"Monkeypox can be spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed," said the CDC website. "The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks."

The disease can spread through prolonged and close skin-to-skin contact, including hugging, cuddling and kissing, and sharing bedding, towels and clothing. Health officials have emphasised that anyone can contract the disease, although men who have sex with men have been more likely to be affected.

The United Nations has also criticised some news coverage about the virus, warning that poor journalism can "reinforce homophobic and racist stereotypes and exacerbate stigma."

The Biden administration has faced criticism for its failure to ensure the availability of vaccines for the disease, contributing to shortages in cities such as New York and San Francisco.

Earlier this week, the White House named officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the CDC to serve as the White House coordinators to combat the outbreak.

Across the U.S., a number of states and municipalities have already declared public health emergencies. California, which has 826 confirmed cases, declared a state of emergency on August 1st, and New York state, which has 1,666 confirmed cases, made a similar announcement on July 29th.

International health organisations have also responded. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the spread of Monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), the global health organisation's highest level of alert, on July 23.

Cases have been reported in more than 70 countries where the disease is not typically present, and the CDC has said more than 26,000 cases have been reported worldwide.

Monkeypox is not known to be a sexually transmitted virus, but sexual contact would constitute close contact, one of the main routes by which the virus is known to spread.

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