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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Shelby County Health Department

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SHELBY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ON ALERT FOR MONKEYPOX

*No cases confirmed in Tennessee at this time*

SHELBY COUNTY, TN – Shelby County Health Department is alerting local health care providers and the public to be aware of signs and symptoms that could indicate monkeypox infection. No cases are under investigation in Shelby County at this time.

Monkeypox is a rare but potentially serious viral illness that occurs primarily in tropical rainforest areas in Central and West Africa, but a recent outbreak that began in early May has led to the identification of a number of cases in Europe, South America and Australia, and one confirmed case in Massachusetts. Six other presumptive cases in several states are now under investigation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Shelby County Health Department is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Tennessee Department of Health in surveillance efforts to quickly identify, isolate and treat any cases that may emerge here in Shelby County. Our two-pronged approach includes communications with health care providers with instructions about reporting potential cases to public health; and communications with the public to alert them of the signs and symptoms of monkeypox.

Monkeypox virus can be transmitted through contact with bodily fluids, monkeypox sores, items that have been contaminated with fluids or sores from an infected person, or through respiratory droplets following face-to-face contact. The incubation period, the time between exposure to the virus and when the illness begins is 7-14 days. Initial symptoms include:

- Fever
- Flu-like illness
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Rash

Symptoms usually begin 1 to 3 days before a rash develops on the body, however symptoms other than rash may not always be present.

The monkeypox rash may appear anywhere on the body, including the face, and often spreads over the torso, arms and legs. Among cases in the current outbreak, the rash often starts in the genital and perianal areas, and may or may not spread to other parts of the body. Anyone who experiences an unusual rash should contact their primary care provider for evaluation.

Monkeypox can cause serious illness, but is rarely fatal. The illness may last for 2-4 weeks and once the rash has healed, the person is no longer considered contagious. Persons who are suspected of having monkeypox should remain isolated until the illness and rash have completely resolved.

The Shelby County Health Department, in conjunction with Tennessee Department of Health, will conduct case investigations and contact tracing of any suspected or confirmed cases in Shelby County.

An effective vaccine against monkeypox exists, but at this time there is no recommendation for vaccination for those with no known exposure to confirmed cases.

For more information about monkeypox, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's monkeypox webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>.

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