



TOMÁS J. ARAGÓN, MD, DrPH  
Director and State Public Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor

November 08, 2022

Dear California Healthcare Providers,

Re: Severe Mpox Infection in People with Untreated HIV and a Weakened Immune System

The mpox outbreak has slowed in California thanks to the leadership of community members, healthcare providers, public health officials, and local health departments. As efforts continue to increase mpox vaccine access, a [new CDC report](#) highlights the potential severity of mpox infection in people with a weakened immune system, particularly in those with untreated HIV. The report describes cases of 57 patients hospitalized with severe mpox complications. Twelve of the 57 patients died; the contribution of mpox to death is still under investigation for some cases. Almost all of the severe cases had a severely weakened immune systems, most often related to untreated HIV infection. Most patients were male (95%) and Black (68%), and delays in initiation of mpox treatment of up to 4 weeks were observed.

This CDC report serves as a reminder that consequences of mpox can be severe for immunocompromised people. While new [clinical data](#) evolves on the level of protection provided by JYNNEOS vaccine in the current outbreak, vaccination is considered an important intervention to reduce severity of illness. Ensuring people at risk for mpox infection, [including all people with HIV](#), get vaccinated is critical. Healthcare providers should consider prompt mpox treatment with tecovirimat for all patients with probable or confirmed mpox who have severe mpox disease or involvement of anatomic areas which might result in serious sequelae that include scarring or strictures. Additionally, treatment should be considered for patients who are at risk for severe disease, including: pediatric populations (particularly patients younger than 8 years of age), pregnant or breastfeeding people, people with a condition affecting skin integrity, and people currently experiencing severe immunocompromise – especially those with untreated HIV. For more information on treatment and treatment considerations, refer to the [CDPH Health Care Professionals page](#). Healthcare providers are strongly encouraged to test all patients with suspected mpox for HIV and bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs) at the time of testing for mpox, as well as provide HIV treatment as soon as possible.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continues to support and work with community stakeholders, local health departments, and healthcare providers to provide



access to mpox vaccine, treatment guidance, and to address [disparities in California](#). To prevent mpox transmission in California, we need to build on our successes to date and address health equity gaps involving access to mpox vaccine and treatment for people to obtain optimal care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tomás Aragón". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tomás" and last name "Aragón" clearly legible.

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH  
Director and State Public Health Officer  
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**Additional Resources:**

- [CDC Report on Severe Mpox](#)
- [Information on Mpox Vaccine page](#)
- [Information on Mpox, HIV, and STI Overlap](#) (PDF)
- [Information for Health Care Providers page](#)
- [CDPH Consideration for Mpox Vaccination in California](#)
- [Community Resources page](#)
- [Communications Toolkit](#)