

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING MPOX VACCINE ACCESS AND ACCEPTANCE AMONG SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITY COMMUNITIES

A collaboration between Glenn Burke Wellness Clinic at Oakland LGBTQ Community Center & CARES Research Lab at University of California, San Francisco

Following the Mpx outbreak of 2022 and the recent rise in cases, this update provides an overview of those impacted and the efforts made to protect the community.

What is Mpx?

Mpx (formerly known as monkeypox) is a disease caused by infection with a virus, known as Monkeypox virus. People with Mpx often get a rash, along with other symptoms. The rash will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing.*

Mpx was declared a public health emergency by WHO and the U.S. surgeon general in 2022.

People living with HIV in the U.S. made up **38%** of Mpx cases. yet account for **94%** of Mpx-related deaths.

The majority (**95%**) of Mpx cases occurred among sexual minority men (SMM).

*CDC, 2024

How did this impact the community?*

People were abstaining from sexual activity for long periods as a preventative measure against Mpx and kept from going out socially.

"There was no romance or anything sexual... I didn't want another thing. I ain't even got the vaccines yet..."

People felt public health messages around the outbreak contributed significantly to the stigma that LGBTQ people experienced.

"My understanding is that there was a higher prevalence when they were getting the numbers. The data was showing that it was more prevalent in gay men and bisexual men. Okay, so say that. Don't just be on the news talking about oh, this is a bisexual and gay disease."

What about vaccines?

The CDC responds to the public health emergency by supplying Jynneos vaccines in:

- SF County
- Bath house in the East Bay

Group of people who are not fully vaccinated (have not received second dose).



How did the Oakland LGBTQ Center get vaccines?

The CEO and Co-Founder of the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center, Joe Hawkins, reached out to the Alameda County Public Health Dept. after learning about the Bay Area's response to the Mpx outbreak and observing who was being vaccinated. He advocated for the Mpx vaccine to be made available to ALL LGBTQIA individuals, regardless of race, insurance, or immigration status.

We need vaccines!!!

**Findings pulled from the Our Lives Matter Study

Conducted by the CARES Research Lab

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of Mpx-related sexual behaviors, stigma, and vaccine barriers and facilitators among Black and Latino SMM living in both California and New York.

- Data was collected between August 2021 and December 2022
- Participants were from California (n = 23) and New York (n = 21)
- Participants identified as Black (n = 32) or Latine (n = 11)

STIGMATIZING MESSAGING

Initial guidelines from the CDC stated:

- SMM who are sexually active with multiple other men,
- Diagnosed with an STI,
- Have sex for money or at commercial sex venues,
- or living with HIV...

...were highest at risk for Mpx and were prioritized for initial vaccinations.

MEDICAL DISTRUST

- Distrust in public health infrastructure and the healthcare system.
- Poor communication on preventative health and Mpx risks.
- Changes in vaccine dosage recommendation.



VACCINATION PROCESS

Criteria for early access to Mpx vaccination was a contributor to Mpx-related stigma.

"I feel like it's how it's been labeled... One of the reasons why I haven't taken the vaccine is because of the [screening] questions."

What did NOT work?

What DID work?

Oakland LGBTQ Center & Alameda County Public Health Dept. collaborated to incentivize efforts of vaccinations (offered \$50 gift cards for getting vaccinated).

PEOPLE FELT MOTIVATED TO GET VACCINATED WHEN:

- They saw diversity in staffing at vaccination sites.
- Recommended by trusted medical providers.
- Were able to get vaccinated in trusted locations such as local church.
- Increased community awareness around Mpx and the importance of getting vaccinated.

PEOPLE MOST COMMONLY ACCESSED VACCINES AT:

- LGBTQ-focused community events
- Pop-up clinics
- The Oakland LGBTQ Center/Glenn Burke Wellness Clinic (GBWC)

What's going on now (current state of things)?

- Vaccines have expired
- Jynneos vaccine no longer is offered for free
- See website where you can access Mpx vaccines:



Alameda County Public Health Dept. Mpx Vaccine Info

How many doses have GBWC given out?

3,052 doses*

*From 2022 - 2024

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QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

GBWC Sign up:



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