

Importance of Maintaining Isolation Precautions for Rule-Out Infectious Diseases

A message from:

Infection Control

This message is being shared with Catholic Health medical staff and providers.

Recently, a patient undergoing evaluation for Monkeypox (Mpox) had Enhanced Isolation Precautions discontinued before diagnostic testing was completed. Subsequent laboratory testing returned positive for Orthopox virus and the New York State Department of Health has advised that the patient be managed as a confirmed Mpox case, pending additional testing. This event resulted in potential exposure to healthcare personnel and has required extensive exposure assessment, contact tracing, and follow-up in collaboration with Associate Health and the Department of Health.

This situation serves as an important reminder that **patients being evaluated for highly transmissible infectious diseases must remain under the appropriate isolation precautions until diagnostic testing is finalized and infection status has been determined**. Premature discontinuation of isolation precautions can place healthcare workers, patients, and visitors at unnecessary risk of exposure.

Providers are asked to ensure that isolation precautions for suspected infectious

diseases are maintained throughout the evaluation process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Clostridioides difficile (C. diff)
- Monkeypox (Mpox)
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Other emerging or highly communicable infectious diseases

For diseases with significant transmission risk, providers should consult with Infection Control before discontinuing or modifying isolation precautions. Collaboration with Infection Control helps ensure appropriate patient management, protects staff and patients, and supports compliance with current public health guidance.

Thank you for your attention to this important patient and staff safety matter and for your continued partnership in preventing healthcare-associated exposures.

