

Monkeypox – Public Health Update

June 11, 2003

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is currently tracking a multi-state outbreak of monkeypox in people exposed to ill pet prairie dogs. The monkeypox-infected prairie dogs were commercially distributed in Villa Park, Illinois, and may have been sold to numerous buyers in 15 states since April 15, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At this time, it is not believed that Nevada received any of the infected animals.

Monkeypox is a rare viral disease that is found mostly in the rainforest countries of central and west Africa. People can get monkeypox from an infected animal through a bite or direct contact with the infected animal's blood, bodily fluid or lesions. The disease has not been previously seen in humans in the United States.

The most up-to-date and comprehensive information on monkeypox is available from the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox/index.htm>

Contacts: Jennifer Sizemore
(702) 383-1225
David Tonelli
(702) 838-6320

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