

Laboratory response network facilitates rapid ID of monkeypox

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The Laboratory Response Network (LRN) has facilitated rapid testing

and detection of patients with monkeypox, according to research published in the July 8 early-release issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Noting that as part of public health preparedness for infectious disease threats, the LRN has the [diagnostic tools](#) to detect *Orthopoxviruses*, the genus that includes *Variola virus*, Tricia A. Aden, from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues describe the rapid diagnostic testing response to the monkeypox outbreak in the United States.

The authors note that the CDC was contacted on May 17, 2022, by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regarding suspected monkeypox, caused by the *Orthopoxvirus Monkeypox virus*. Specimens were obtained and tested with LRN testing capability using the non-variola Orthopoxvirus (NVO) assay. During June, 68 LRN laboratories nationwide had the capacity to test about 8,000 NVO tests per week. LRN laboratories tested 2,009 specimens from suspected monkeypox cases during May 17 to June 30. Of these, 730 specimens (36.3 percent) from 395 patients were positive for NVO. The CDC confirmed NVO-positive [specimens](#) from 159 patients to be [monkeypox](#); final characterization is pending for 236 patients. Prompt identification allowed rapid response to the outbreak, including patient isolation and treatment, vaccine administration, and other public health actions.

"Expansion to five commercial laboratories starting the week of July 5 should make testing more accessible, increase convenience for providers and patients by both using existing provider-laboratory relationships and eliminating the need for prior public health approval, and further augment national capacity," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to industry.

More information: Tricia A. Aden et al, Rapid Diagnostic Testing for

Response to the Monkeypox Outbreak—Laboratory Response Network, United States, May 17–June 30, 2022, *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (2022). [DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm7128e1](https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7128e1)

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