

# Small but Mighty: MGH Clinic Administers More Than 3,000 Monkeypox Vaccines

“We’re a small clinic that was tasked with a big job!”

In May, Mass General diagnosed the first case of monkeypox in the United States during the recent global outbreak. In the ensuing months, the MGH Sexual Health Clinic has played a large role in addressing the prevention and care of individuals at risk for – or diagnosed with – monkeypox infection across Massachusetts. On July 6, its staff began offering vaccinations to at-risk individuals and has since administered more than 3,000 doses. Suzanne Morrison, manager of the MGH Sexual Health Clinic, says while this effort has been challenging, it has been equally as rewarding.

“It’s been exciting and chaotic,” Morrison says, “but our patients are incredibly grateful that we have the vaccines. We’ve made a bunch of new friends at Mass General in the process, too.”

Clinic staff have worked closely with colleagues in the Mass General Ambulatory Management, Patient Access Center, Department of Pharmacy, Infection Control Unit, the Mass General Brigham COVID-19 Nurse Line and Mass General Brigham Digital Health to make vaccinations accessible.

Morrison is particularly grateful for the Bulfinch Temporary Service nurses, who help staff the clinic and vaccinate patients. Jessica Dejoie, RN, has been assigned to the clinic since August and says her patients are thankful and eager for the opportunity to receive the vaccine.

“This experience has been wonderful,” she says. “Patients ask lots of questions, which is great. It’s nice to see how many people are willing to get vaccinated.”

Although clinical guidelines and workflows are continuously changing, Kevin Ard, MD, medical director of the Sexual Health Clinic, says the team was prepared for unpredictability thanks to its experience with COVID-19 vaccinations.

“We had all accepted guidance could change at any time, so we were ready for things to evolve and change,” he says. “We had all been through that once before in such a major way with COVID-19, so we rolled with it.”

One of the most challenging changes for the team came in August when vaccine administration was switched from a subcutaneous to an intradermal injection. Jacob Lazarus, MD, PhD, attending physician in the MGH Infectious Disease Unit, says while the change was difficult, it was ultimately the right decision for patients.

“Moving to intradermal allowed us to give less vaccine and get the same immune response,” Lazarus says. “This meant vaccinating more people.”

Revisha Gobardhan, administrative director for the MGH Infectious Disease Unit, says as soon as the guidance on intradermal injection came out from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the team began organizing trainings for nurses, creating workflows and developing FAQs for patients.

“Being on the back end and seeing what goes into the planning efforts has been inspiring,” Gobardhan says. “I’m glad I had the opportunity to contribute in this way.”

During public health emergencies such as the monkeypox outbreak, the Sexual Health Clinic team attributes its success to teamwork and the strong relationships they have within the MGH.

“This has all been really inspiring and impressive to watch,” Ard says. “At Mass General, people really come together when it matters.” ■



Dejoie administers a monkeypox vaccine

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