

Free monkeypox vaccine offered at Pride Center in Wilton Manors

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MIAMI - More monkeypox cases are continuing to pop up in South Florida.

We're seeing the majority of them in Broward County and to get ahead of the problem, the Pride Center in Wilton Manors is offering free monkeypox vaccines.

There is a large demand for the vaccine. Nurses tell CBS4 they vaccinated dozens of people Tuesday and their schedules are jam-packed for the rest of the week with every appointment filled.

"It looks very concerning honestly," says Jesus Vicent, one of the many getting vaccinated.

"Life happens and you need to be responsible. Protect yourself and help others," says Ed Stupi.

"The setting up of the vaccine sites shows the lessons we've learned from COVID in terms of getting out in front of these viruses," said Joshua Lenchus, the Interim Assistant Chief Medical Officer of Broward Health.

The Department of Health said they're actively monitoring the number of cases popping up in South Florida. Right now, there are 89 presumed monkeypox cases between Broward and Miami-Dade Counties.

"Many of the cases we are seeing now start off as a sexually transmitted infection in the groin or anal area which also explains why we are seeing it in the mouth," says Lenchus.

He says the sores will dry up and disappear within 2-4 weeks but if someone is infected with monkeypox, the virus can spread easily through open sores and bodily fluids.

"Even being in contact with bedding, sheets, towels, laundry, all of those things could transmit the disease. So, we're telling folks to stay away. People who have monkeypox should really be isolating until these lesions crust over and fall off," explains Lenchus.

And while the coronavirus and monkeypox are completely different viruses, people we talked to say after dealing with COVID for the last two and a half years, they're staying ahead of the game this time, getting vaccinated early.

"It is kind of scary, but I guess our response in the middle of all of this is to be responsible as well," says Vicent.

Appointments at the Pride Center are fully booked for the rest of the week, but the Broward Wellness Center and Richardson House have availability.