

Monkeypox not hitting SA

Lunga Simelane

Deputy Health Minister Sibongiseni Dhlomo says there is no need to panic over monkeypox just yet and it seems South Africa, for now, is escaping the worst of it.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in America, the US had the most cases (9 491), the United Kingdom has 2 982 and Brazil has 2 131. Four people have died from monkeypox in Nigeria so far.

According to Dhlomo, monkeypox was declared a notifiable disease but the department of health was not worried in terms of the impact on society.

“Compared to other countries, we are not that concerned,” he said.

Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa researcher and immunologist Dr Aida Sivo said it would be naive to think SA would escape what was happening around the world regarding monkeypox.

The monkeypox meter revealed the total cases around the world were currently at 35 621, with SA at four.

Sivo said with the continuous rise in cases globally, there was no doubt there would be more cases in SA.

“We need to do better in raising awareness about monkeypox transmission, prevention and protection measures and disease signs and symptoms,” she said.

Minister of Health Dr Joe Phaahla announced on Monday a fourth case of monkeypox was identified through testing on a 28-year old male from the Western Cape who returned from Spain in the second week of August.

The fourth case followed three laboratory-confirmed cases which were reported in males aged 30, 32 and 42 from Gauteng, Western Cape and Limpopo.

“Public health response measures to prevent the spread of the infection, including contact tracing, have been instituted,” he said.

Sivo said this was the time to be proactive. “We should be working on getting access to vaccines,” she said.