



The hand carrying of items was among multiple transportation strategies employed to expedite the dispatch of monkeypox diagnostic kits from WHO’s Dubai Hub to countries of the Region Cairo, 6 July 2022 – In swift response to the global monkeypox outbreak – and true to its vision of “health for all by all: a call for solidarity and action” – the WHO’s Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has successfully orchestrated the delivery of monkeypox reagents from its logistics hub in Dubai to 20 of the Region’s countries in 11 days.

“With the first signs of the monkeypox outbreak, and with no testing capacity for the disease in the Region, the Regional Office operated so rapidly as to make the Eastern Mediterranean the first WHO region to procure enough testing kits to prepare for the needs of the countries within its mandate,” said WHO Regional Director Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari.

The first batch was dispatched to establish testing capacity in 3 of the Region’s reference laboratories in Abu Dhabi, Oman and Morocco, to support other laboratories in the Region. A week later, approval was obtained to establish a stock for the Eastern Mediterranean in the WHO Dubai Hub, which proceeded to distribute the testing kits to the Region’s country offices upon receiving them on 9 June. Senior leadership at the ministries of health were also contacted for expedited importation approval to support WHO with immediate delivery.

The WHO Dubai Hub team immediately inspected and prepared the monkeypox diagnostics kits for instant dispatch across the Region, employing multiple transportation strategies, including the hand-carrying of items by WHO Dubai Hub and WHO Afghanistan staff, the use of the Regional Office’s pouch system, DHL courier services, and commercial transportation via regularly scheduled flights. The time-sensitive nature of this operation necessitated exceptional approvals for staff travel to support the most efficient delivery possible to protect public health.

The Dubai Hub team prepared the international export documentation within 48 hours of receipt in Dubai and rapidly accelerated the distribution of these critical diagnostics to support

laboratory surveillance efforts. In several cases, the diagnostic kits were delivered to their final destinations within days of arrival in Dubai.

Delivering the monkeypox diagnostics kits across the Region in an average of 11 days, the process also saved WHO over US\$ 15 000 in transportation costs, rendering the operation both timely and cost effective. The operation now serves as a baseline for preparedness and response at a time when the WHO Regional Office struggles with the greatest number of outbreaks of infectious diseases in recent years.

Monday 6th of May 2024 09:47:58 PM