

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 19, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independent Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

We are writing to request additional assistance to help address the monkeypox outbreak in Michigan. Given the rapid spread of the disease, federal support and action is necessary to curb the growing threat to our constituents' health and safety.

The first probable case of the monkeypox virus was reported in Michigan on June 29¹, and the virus has continued to spread throughout the state during the following weeks. Currently, there are 71 reported cases in Michigan, and that number is expected to grow in the days and weeks ahead, with the reported case total doubling in since Monday.²

Monkeypox is typically spread by close physical contact with an infected individual, and can cause painful sores, fever, headache and exhaustion for several weeks.³ While the mortality risk is low, the disease presents a heightened risk to people who are immunocompromised or pregnant, as well as other vulnerable groups.⁴

Given the rapid rise of cases, timely and aggressive action is critical to mitigate the public health threat of monkeypox. As the State of Michigan continues to devote significant resources to addressing COVID-19, additional support from the federal government is critical to provide a strong and sustained response to monkeypox. Given this, we request that you:

- Utilize existing federal authorities to obtain additional allocations of vaccines, including continuing to work closely with manufacturers and international partners to obtain more vaccine doses to distribute to Michigan and other states at risk from monkeypox;
- Expand access to diagnostic testing to ensure that that public health officials, as well as frontline medical providers in Michigan and elsewhere have the tools necessary to diagnose, test and trace the monkeypox outbreak;
- Continue to coordinate closely with state and local officials on the ground to ensure that these resources are being directed appropriately to the areas of greatest need.

¹ <https://www.freep.com/story/news/health/2022/06/29/monkeypox-virus-suspected-oakland-county/9893868002/>.

² <https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2022/08/monkeypox-cases-nearly-double-in-michigan-as-virus-becomes-public-health-emergency.html>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/briefing/monkeypox-contagious-vaccines-us.html>

⁴ Ibid.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress


Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress


Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress


Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress


Andy Levin
Member of Congress
, Committee on Education and
Labor


Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress


Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress