

July 19, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

Dear Chairs Leahy and DeLauro, Vice Chair Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger,

As nonpartisan national, state, and local public health organizations, we are writing to urge Congress to include a minimum of \$100 million in the FY'23 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill to ensure our country has sufficient resources to mount a robust response to the escalating Monkeypox outbreak.

As public health leaders who represent health care providers, researchers, and infectious disease experts working on the frontlines to protect Americans from this emerging threat, we are concerned with how quickly this outbreak has been allowed to spread in the U.S. In the span of four days last week, the number of cases in the U.S. more than doubled from 866 identified cases to 1,814, and persistent obstacles to testing suggest that the actual case count is underreported.

Additional funding is needed for clinical services such as testing, treatment, and vaccine distribution to respond effectively. In addition, we need investments in partner services, education, community outreach, and research to ensure an effective monkeypox response and limit the spread of the virus in our communities.

The virus mimics symptoms of common sexually transmitted disease (STDs) and low awareness about the virus and how it spreads has impeded control efforts. States and communities have already tapped the STD and public health fields' expertise in disease detection, contact tracing, symptom monitoring, and community education, as well as connections to impacted communities. While the Administration has taken important steps in the initial response, we cannot halt an expanding outbreak at current funding levels.

We are entering this outbreak with critical lessons learned from the HIV and STD epidemics, and the COVID-19 pandemic, and we cannot afford missteps. We need real-time data collection efforts, a public health system that can respond swiftly and accurately to infectious disease outbreaks, and effective interventions. This requires funding and leadership; and the undersigned organizations stand ready to support your efforts.

In addition, due to the chronic underfunding of public health programs, and the strain that the lack of funds has put on our public health system, the immediate need presented by the monkeypox outbreak

does not alter the need for sustained and increased investments within HHS to expand capacity to address other existing and future public health threats. We ask you to act immediately to secure the additional funds to address the monkeypox outbreak and stop the spread of this infectious disease.

For questions or further information, please contact the National Coalition of STD Directors' director of federal policy, Rachel Deitch at rdeitch@ncsddc.org.

Signed,

AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Foundation Chicago
AIDS United
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Sexual Health Association
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Association of State and Territorial Public Health Social Workers
Community Education Group
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Equality California
Fast-Track Cities Institute
Georgia AIDS Coalition
HealthHIV
HIV Medicine Association
Human Rights Campaign
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care
NASTAD
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Coalition for LGBTQ Health
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
NMAC
Prevention Access Campaign
Project Weber/RENEW
R2H Action [Right to Health]
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Silver State Equality-Nevada
The AIDS Institute
Treatment Action Group