



**One Hundred Seventeenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

Aug 1, 2022

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
U.S. Comptroller General
Government Accountability Office
441 G St., NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

We are writing to request that the Government Accountability Office examine the adequacy of the Federal response to the monkeypox outbreak and make recommendations for ongoing and future preparedness and response efforts.

On July 23, 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared monkeypox a “public health emergency of international concern.” According to the CDC, as of July 25, there are 18,095 reported cases of monkeypox worldwide, and 3,487 cases in the U.S.¹ New York State alone accounts for nearly 30 percent of reported U.S. cases, and reported cases are likely only a fraction of the actual number.² The virus is having a disproportionately destructive impact on the LGBTQ community, whose public health needs have long been ignored. For many in the LGBTQ community, history is, unfortunately, repeating itself.

When there is an infectious disease outbreak, the Federal government has an obligation to make vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics widely available without undue delay. We are concerned that the pace of the Federal response to monkeypox has enabled the virus to spread for two months and delays in distributing tests and vaccines have harmed efforts to contain the virus. Indeed, even though the United States had at its disposal more than a million doses of the Jynneos vaccine—in a plant in Denmark—it took two months to approve the distribution of those doses, allowing the virus to begin to entrench itself as a rapidly spreading rare disease in the interim.³

The public health system in America is profoundly broken, which has serious consequences for preparing for and responding to public health emergencies and pandemics. With that in mind, we ask that you examine the extent to which the Federal government—including the Centers for Disease Control, Food and Drug Administration, and Department of Homeland Security: 1) adequately planned and prepared for the monkeypox public health emergency; 2) are appropriately responding to the emergency; and 3) considered and are applying lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to the emergency.

¹ “2022 Monkeypox Outbreak Global Map.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 20 July 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/world-map.html>.

² “2022 U.S. Map & Case Count.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 22 July 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/us-map.html>.

³ Perrone, Matthew. “U.S. Regulators Clear Way for More Monkeypox Vaccine Shipments from Denmark.” *PBS*, Public Broadcasting Service, 14 July 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/u-s-regulators-clear-way-for-more-monkeypox-vaccine-shipments-from-denmark>.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to your response.

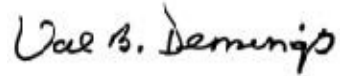
Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Chairman



RITCHIE TORRES
Vice Chairman



VAL BUTLER DEMINGS
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Emergency
Preparedness, Response, and Recovery