



July 18, 2022

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Walensky,

As the five Borough Presidents representing New York City, we are writing to express our concerns about the federal government's response to the outbreak of monkeypox. In particular, we are concerned about the vaccine supply that the federal government is making available to New York.

At present, New York City is the epicenter of the monkeypox outbreak in the United States. Nationally, **1,813** cases have been diagnosed, of which 618 are here in New York City. At this time, we do not have a breakdown of cases by borough. While the city government is responding to the outbreak, we need more support from the federal government in terms of vaccines and testing capacity.

As you know, monkeypox is a transmissible viral infection, which often causes itchy and painful rashes and sores. While most individuals who contract the virus are able to recover at home over a period of weeks, some require hospitalization, mostly due to the severe pain that the sores cause. Fortunately, we have not seen any fatalities as of yet. We are especially concerned about the transmission among the LGBTQ+ community, particularly among men who have sex with men. This group is at elevated risk, and we must do more to ensure that they receive the necessary support and intervention.

Thus far, New York City has received **21,821** doses of the monkeypox vaccine. However, this is woefully inadequate to meet the demand for the vaccine among high-risk populations. The city has opened three vaccination sites across the city and has opened a web portal for signups. More must be done to ensure that everyone who wants a vaccine can get one.

We were glad to hear that the FDA has completed its inspection of the Danish vaccine plant and will begin importing hundreds of thousands of doses by the end of the month. This is welcome



news, but the federal government must allocate these doses to where the need is greatest: and that is disproportionately New York City.

When we get a large number of doses, we must also allocate them to those at highest risk, including people with underlying conditions such as HIV/AIDS. We cannot repeat the failed government response to past epidemics like with HIV. The LGBTQ+ community is counting on us to get the response right this time. We must act deliberately and urgently to prevent monkeypox from taking a hold in our neighborhoods and becoming a circulating disease.

We must recognize that we would not be in this position today had the federal government taken adequate steps to combat monkeypox outbreak around the world before it could come to this country. Had the federal government and other developed nations provided treatment and vaccines to African countries where this disease is endemic, it could have prevented the global spread of this virus.

Thank you for your work in distributing the vaccines thus far. Please continue to prioritize New York City for future allocations because we are the epicenter of this outbreak. Together, we can address this virus before it reaches epidemic proportions.

Sincerely,

Vanessa L. Gibson
Bronx Borough President

Antonio Reynoso
Brooklyn Borough President

Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President

Vito J. Fossella
Staten Island Borough President

Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President