

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 22, 2022

The Honorable Dawn O’Connell
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and
Response
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20201

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

Dear Assistant Secretary O’Connell and Dr. Walensky:

We write to express concern about the increasing number of monkeypox cases in the United States, and to urge the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to apply an interagency approach to address this outbreak, including by increasing access to the JYNNEOS monkeypox and smallpox vaccine in the United States.

The United States has invested billions of dollars to develop, manufacture, and stockpile doses of the JYNNEOS vaccine as a component of a federal biosecurity program. We understand that this vaccine is the current preferred option for monkeypox vaccination given its approval by the FDA, ease of administration, and general tolerability.

However, across the country, state and local and health officials have reported that the limited vaccine supplies are not keeping pace with the growing number of people seeking appointments¹, a gap that continues to fuel anxiety about a virus that is generally unfamiliar to Americans, who are urgently looking for solutions.

Monkeypox is spread through direct contact and can infect anyone. Yet health care services are too often inaccessible or otherwise denied to members of at-risk communities, particularly the LGBTQ+ community. It is critical for vaccine access to be equitable, even in the face of high demand. Indeed, demand is so high for vaccination that appointment slots made available by public health agencies have been filled nearly instantly², and some sites have even crashed due to high traffic from our constituents³.


¹ “States Grapple with Rising Demand for Monkeypox Vaccines,” PBS NewsHour, July 14, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/states-grapple-with-rising-demand-for-monkeypox-vaccines>.

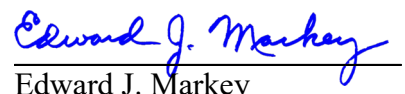
² “DC Health Appointments for Monkeypox Vaccination Filled within Minutes,” WTOP News, June 27, 2022, <https://wtop.com/dc/2022/06/dc-health-appointments-for-monkeypox-vaccination-filled-within-minutes/>.


³ “NYC Monkeypox Vaccine Site Is Crashing From High Demand,” *Bloomberg.Com*, July 12, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-12/monkeypox-latest-new-york-city-vaccination-website-crashes-on-high-demand>


In light of this high demand and the communities that have been impacted by the outbreak in the United States to date, we implore you to work with urgency to take the necessary action to respond to this public health concern and ensure adequate doses and equitable distribution of the vaccine in the United States. We look forward to your response and continued partnership in addressing this public health concern.


Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

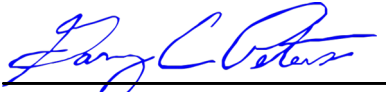

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator


Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

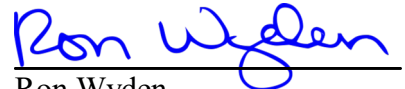

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



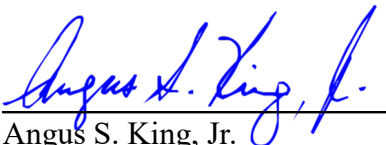
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Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



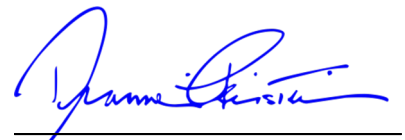
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United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



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