December 5, 2022

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs DeLauro and Murray and Ranking Members Cole and Blunt,

The undersigned national, state, and community-based public health and LGBTQ organizations urge you to include an additional $900 million in the final negotiations on the FY’23 omnibus appropriations bill to respond to monkeypox (mpox). The White House’s critical needs supplemental request submitted last week includes $400 million to replenish the smallpox vaccine supply, but their request overlooks the ways in which the outbreak severely depleted local supplies, worsened workforce shortages, and strained overall capacity at an alarming rate. The additional items outlined below comprise the other critical foundational components needed to properly respond to the ongoing outbreak.

This summer, our public health departments and front-line providers faced unprecedented pressure from the simultaneous public health crises of 21,000 cases of mpox,1 13,000,000 cases of COVID-19,2 and the ongoing HIV, hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STI) syndemic.

As the initial wave of the mpox outbreak continues to subside, it’s clear that our national strategy worked, but at a cost. To effectively respond to MPOX and future infectious disease outbreaks, we request that the omnibus package provide additional funding as follows:

1. $400 million to restore the smallpox vaccine stockpile;
2. $250 million to state and local public health departments for testing capacity, vaccine administration, surveillance, and epidemiology studies for mpox; and
3. $250 million for community health centers, Ryan White and STI clinics and providers on the front lines of mpox to replenish supplies, alleviate staffing shortages, and restore capacity.

Each of these steps, taken together, will strengthen our strained and underfunded public health system. But we cannot continue to jump from emergency to emergency. A sustained investment is needed now to provide public health departments and clinics with the resources necessary to operate as our nation’s first lines of defense. The United States must be prepared for the next infectious disease outbreak while not losing ground in the fight against mpox, COVID-19, HIV, hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections.

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1 From May 1 to September 1, 2022.
2 From May 1 to September 1, 2022.
Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to Rachel Deitch at the National Coalition of STD Directors via email at rdeitch@ncsddc.org.

Signed,

AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC)
AIDS United
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
APLA Health
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of Latinos/as/xs Motivating Action
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Big Cities Health Coalition
Community Education Group
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Fenway Health
Georgia AIDS Coalition
Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club HIV Caucus
HealthHI
HIV Dental Alliance
HIV Medicine Association
Human Rights Campaign
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Justice Resource Institute
Los Angeles LGBT Center
NASTAD
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Harm Reduction Coalition
NMAC
PrEP4All
R2H Action (Right to Health)
Safer Together
San Francisco Community Health Center
The AIDS Institute
The PAIGE Inc.
The San Francisco Principles 2020
Treatment Action Group (TAG)
Whitman-Walker Health