



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 294

Resolution calling upon the United States Department of Health and Human Services to increase the number of monkeypox vaccines available and ensure the amount of vaccines sent to New York City is reflective of the proportion of the nationwide cases for an equitable distribution and effective containment of the nationwide monkeypox outbreak.

By Council Members Hudson, Bottcher, Oss?, Cab?n, Schulman, Carr, Richardson Jordan, Powers, Brewer, Restler, Hanif, Won, Nurse, Far?as, Avil?s, Narcisse, Vel?zquez, Krishnan, Williams, Guti?rrez, Brooks-Powers, Ayala, Joseph, Sanchez, Abreu, Louis and Lee

Whereas, Monkeypox, which is a contagious disease that is spread through close physical and intimate contact, is now spreading across the globe, including the United States and other nations that have generally been free from the monkeypox virus in recent decades; and

Whereas, Monkeypox is not as contagious as other viruses, such as the virus that causes COVID-19, and is typically spread through direct contact with rash, sores, and/or bodily fluids of an infected person; respiratory droplets; kissing; engaging in sexual activity; or sharing clothes, bedsheets, or food; and

Whereas, While any person can be susceptible to monkeypox, the recent outbreak has clustered around members of the LGBTQ+ community, specifically, gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM); and

Whereas, Although the mortality rate for monkeypox is between three to six percent globally, in countries like the United States, with access to quality health care, the death rate falls below one percent; and

Whereas, Although monkeypox is rarely fatal and often self-healing, symptoms include rash, sores, discomfort from itching, fevers, headaches, and tiredness that may appear seven to 21 days after the exposure and last for a few days to a few weeks; and

Whereas, New York City has become the national epicenter of monkeypox, with the highest rate of infected persons and, according to New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett, this number is expected to increase as more testing is made available; and

Whereas, As of August 3, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported 6,617 cases nationwide, with New York State making up almost a quarter of the total infected persons (1,666 individuals); and

Whereas, As of August 3, 2022, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) reported a growing count of 1,558 monkeypox cases, which is almost equivalent to the CDC's total of 1,666 infectious individuals for New York State, emphasizing that the bulk of cases from New York State are coming from New York City; and

Whereas, In response to the outbreak, as of July 21, 2022, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has distributed nearly 200,000 JYNNEOS vaccinations, a two-dose vaccine for monkeypox and smallpox, administered over a period of 14 days, nationwide; and

Whereas, As of July 21, 2022, those eligible in New York State for the vaccine include individuals with recent exposure to a suspected or confirmed monkeypox case within the past 14 days; those at high risk of a recent exposure to monkeypox (including gay men, those in the bisexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming community and other communities of MSM); and individuals who have had skin-to-skin contact with someone in a social network experiencing monkeypox spread; and

Whereas, New York City has the highest infection rate in the country, yet as of July 19, 2022, it has only received approximately 12% (23,963) of JYNNEOS doses out of the 200,000 distributed by HHS, leading to an extreme vaccination shortage in the city for eligible individuals; and

Whereas, This shortage of monkeypox vaccinations was demonstrated when all 9,200 appointments made available by DOHMH were booked within 10 minutes of launch, leading the website to crash; and

Whereas, Due to this unprecedented demand, an additional 14,500 doses were sent to New York City by the Federal government; and

Whereas, Out of those 14,500 doses, 8,200 first dose appointments were made available on July 15, 2022, but were booked within minutes, leaving many eligible patients frustrated as they anxiously await appointments to protect themselves and their loved ones from monkeypox; and

Whereas, An additional 4,000 doses were reserved for referrals from community partner organizations serving highest -risk patients and the remaining vaccines were kept for second dose appointments until more vaccines arrive; and

Whereas, This shortage could have dire consequences as infection rates more than doubled within the week of July 13 to July 20, 2022 in New York City, jumping from 336 to 711 cases; and

Whereas, In July, HHS began distributing 800,000 new vaccinations throughout the country, allotting about 14% (110,000) of JYNNEOS doses to New York State from which, only 80,000 vaccines or 10% of the total supply will be given to the New York City; and

Whereas, As of August 3, 2022, DOHMH has received approximately 40% (32,000) of the promised doses of JYNNEOS vaccines, opening 23,000 new first-dose appointment on its online portal on August 4, 2022, while reserving the rest for referrals from community partner organizations, health care providers, and close contacts of known cases; and

Whereas, On July 11, 2022, New York City Mayor Eric Adams wrote an open letter to United States President Joseph Biden requesting an equity-driven allocation of monkeypox vaccinations for the residents of the New York City; and

Whereas, On July 23, 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO), declared monkeypox a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern," to urge countries to take immediate actions; and

Whereas, On July 29, 2022, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul issued an executive order, declaring the monkeypox outbreak a state disaster emergency to allow a quicker and more flexible response to the growing outbreak; and

Whereas, On August 1, 2022, Mayor Adams issued an emergency executive order, declaring monkeypox a local state of emergency, further echoing alarm on the necessity of equitable monkeypox vaccine distribution and testing services within New York City; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Department of Health and Human Services to increase the number of monkeypox vaccines available and ensure the amount of vaccines sent to New York City is reflective of the proportion of the nationwide cases for an equitable distribution and effective containment of the nationwide monkeypox outbreak.

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