



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

August 15, 2022

Dr. Sharon Lewis, Interim Director
DC Health
899 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Dr. Lewis:

More than two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, District residents are now facing another emerging health crisis about which they know little and fear much: the monkeypox virus. DC Health has implemented some of the same successful methods of communication that have been employed to share information about the coronavirus, and we see that the information is reaching many of those who are most at risk and who are eligible for the limited supply of monkeypox vaccines.

In conversations with our constituents and through our observations, we have found three areas where additional information and communication appear to be needed. We seek DC Health's assistance and urge you to take steps to address them:

Broader communication to lower-risk residents. Many residents who are not considered at high risk for monkeypox are scared for themselves and for their children who will return to school later this month. They do not feel they have sufficient information to know what their own risk is or how to protect themselves and their family members.

We urge DC Health to develop communications, dashboards, and other materials aimed at residents who are outside the highest-risk groups and share them widely. This should include working with public schools to communicate about monkeypox and school safety before the start of school later this month. Many parents of young children are concerned about spread because kids at these ages often have close contact through playful activities.

Equitable vaccine distribution. Like DC Health, we are highly attentive to the imperative of equitable distribution of vaccines. We have heard and observed anecdotally strong communication efforts via social media and online vaccine registration processes. We would like to know more about what other efforts are being undertaken to reach eligible residents who may not be on social media or have consistent internet connection. We are interested in learning more

about how DC Health is applying lessons learned during COVID about communicating and distributing vaccines to the monkeypox situation.

We request that DC Health provide information to the Council to help us and the public assess efforts to equitably distribute vaccines, including: data on vaccine distribution by ward and other relevant characteristics; an overview of current and planned outreach efforts, especially to those who are not on social media or have consistent/any access to the internet; and an explanation of the appointment scheduling process, especially how people with limited or no internet access are able to schedule appointments.

DC Health’s government relations team has given useful and timely briefings to Council staff on COVID-19 and other health issues, and we would encourage/appreciate a similar briefing on this emerging issue that so many residents know little about.

We stand ready to partner with you, as well, and will continue to share materials and information publicly about this and other public health situations.

Sincerely,



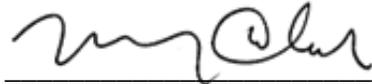
Councilmember Elissa Silverman



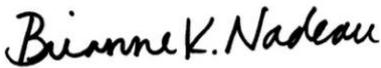
Councilmember Charles Allen



Councilmember Anita Bonds



Councilmember Mary Cheh



Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau



Councilmember Brooke Pinto



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.



Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.

CC: Kevin Donahue, City Administrator
Patrick Ashley, Senior Deputy, HEPRA, DC Health