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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 13, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

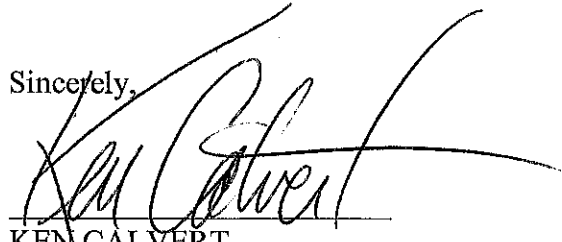
I am concerned by Health and Human Services' (HHS) response to the current Monkeypox outbreak. Just as the United States is slowly emerging from the deadly consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, our country is facing a new public health challenge. While it is comforting to know that accurate testing and effective vaccines for the virus have already been developed, it is troubling to hear reports of confusion and lack of certainty as to how the federal government plans to respond to the outbreak.

As you know, there have been over seven hundred reported cases of Monkeypox since the current U.S. outbreak was first confirmed on May 19, 2022. Since then, numerous public health experts have conveyed confusion over the federal government's plan to contain the outbreak including information on identifying disease characteristics, official testing protocols, and a vaccine distribution strategy. This apparent lack of transparency and communication from our nation's top public health agency is entirely unacceptable. Therefore, I ask you to provide Congress with a detailed written response on steps being taken to address the following questions:

1. What is the current national testing capacity? How many tests are available for distribution? If tests are in short supply, how will the agency prioritize vulnerable communities?
2. What education campaigns are underway for high-risk populations and health care professionals? Please provide information on the substance of any education campaigns including information on disease characteristics, prevention, testing and vaccination locations, and potential therapeutics.
3. What is the current vaccine distribution strategy? How will high-risk individuals be prioritized? How many doses of Jynneos and ACAM2000 are available and what barriers exist to ensure safe and rapid production?

Our public health leaders cannot afford to make the same mistakes twice, whether it be in response to this outbreak or the next. Of the most important lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic was that transparency and communication from national health experts is not only critical in effectively responding to a public health emergency but also necessary to maintain public trust in our institutions. Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Calvert", written over a horizontal line.

KEN CALVERT

Member of Congress