

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2022

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

As Members of Congress representing California, we write to ask for your assistance in bolstering monkeypox (MPV) vaccination distribution at community clinics in our districts. We request the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) expeditiously review and approve requests from California to establish a Medicare rate and allow for reimbursement of community clinics for MPV vaccine administration.

As you know, monkeypox has rapidly spread across the country while disproportionately impacting certain areas and communities. In California alone, the state Department of Public Health has reported 4,140 cases as of September 8, 2022—the highest total in the country—and nearly 60% of statewide cases are concentrated in just two jurisdictions: Los Angeles and San Francisco. MPV has disproportionately affected members of the LGBTQ+ community, even though anyone is susceptible to acquiring and transmitting the virus.

Community clinics and other providers work tirelessly to ensure access to timely, affordable care for all individuals, regardless of ability to pay. Many of these clinics have historically provided services to the LGBTQ+ community and are serving on the frontlines of the MPV response in our districts. Community clinics are adjusting clinical operations to meet this growing public health challenge while navigating the toll COVID-19 pandemic has caused in loss of workforce and revenue. While MPV vaccines are currently being distributed by the federal government at no cost, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and Tribal Health Programs are not currently receiving reimbursement for vaccine administration when the vaccination is administered outside of a billable encounter. FQHCs and Tribal Health Programs often administer vaccinations utilizing non-billable providers. Clinics are seeing a significant increase in vaccinations above the anticipated rates included in their Prospective Payment System or All-Inclusive encounter rates due to MPV Public Health Emergency. This increase in demand results in additional cost pressures on these critical partners.

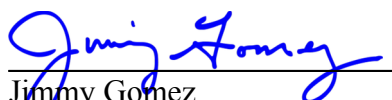
The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) recently proposed State Plan Amendment 22-0062 to establish Medi-Cal payment rates for MPV vaccine administration and

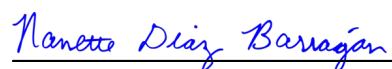
allow for supplemental reimbursement for MPV vaccine only visits for FQHCs/Tribal FQHCs, Rural Health Centers, and Tribal Health Program providers.¹ DHCS previously requested guidance from CMS to establish a Medicare rate for MPV vaccine administration so that a corresponding Medi-Cal rate can be set.²


Providers including community clinics have already distributed tens of thousands of MPV vaccines without reimbursement for vaccine administration. These safety net providers rely on adequate reimbursement to continue providing these critical services vaccinating our communities. We appreciate the confidence the Biden Administration has placed in community clinics to deliver the MPV vaccine to the most vulnerable communities. However, it is critical that they have the resources and staff they need to keep our communities healthy. Your urgent attention to these requests will help to ensure that critical providers and community clinics in our districts are able to continue their vital work vaccinating the residents of California and combating the MPV outbreak.


Thank you for your consideration of our request and continued attention to this pandemic. We look forward to your response and working with you to safeguard our communities and fight the spread of MPV.

Sincerely,


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

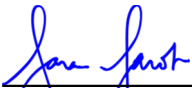

Nanette Diaz Barragan
Member of Congress


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Alex Padilla
United States Senator

¹ State Plan Amendment 22-0062: Reimbursement for Monkeypox (MPOX) Vaccine Administration, September 9, 2022. <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/laws/Documents/SPA-22-0062-Pending.pdf>.

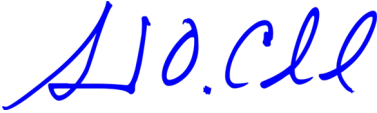
² California Request for Action: Monkeypox (MPX) Virus Guidance, August, 12, 2022. <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/monkeypox/MPX-CA-Letter-to-CMS.pdf>.



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



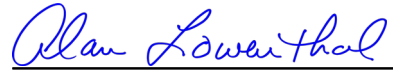
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



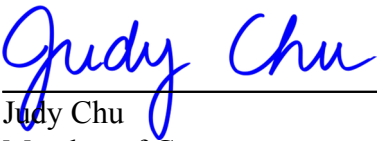
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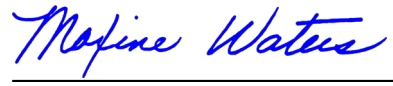
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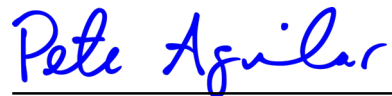
Mike Levin
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Adam B. Schiff
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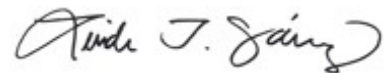
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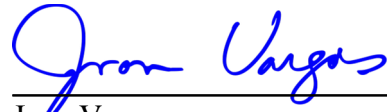
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



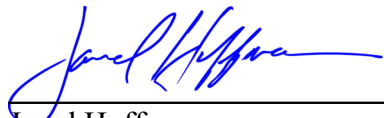
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