

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3215**

July 18, 2022

The Honorable Christi Grimm  
Inspector General  
The Department of Health and Human Services  
330 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Gene Dodaro  
U.S. Comptroller General  
The Government Accountability Office  
441 G St., NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Inspector General Grimm and U.S. Comptroller General Dodaro:

I am writing to formally request that you consider an investigation into the failed federal response to the monkeypox outbreak, which has had a disproportionately destructive impact on the LGBTQ community. The US has a long and ugly history of ignoring the public health needs of the LGBTQ community. For many in the community, history is repeating itself.

When there is an infectious disease outbreak, the federal government has an obligation to make vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics immediately and widely available. Instead of acting with a sense of urgency, both the CDC and FDA moved at a bureaucratic pace, enabling the virus to spread uncontrollably for two months. A highly containable virus has thus been rendered uncontainable by inexplicable delays in distributing both tests and vaccines. Indeed, even though the US had at its disposal more than a million doses of the Jynneos vaccine—in a plant in Denmark, able and ready to be deployed at a moment's notice—the FDA took two months to approve the distribution of those doses, allowing the virus to entrench itself as a sexually transmitted infection in the meantime.<sup>1</sup>

As of July 15, 2022, there are 12,556 reported cases of monkeypox throughout the world, with about 1,500 cases coming from the United States.<sup>2</sup> New York State alone accounts for a third of reported cases in the US, and the reported cases are likely a fraction of the actual number.<sup>3 4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/u-s-regulators-clear-way-for-more-monkeypox-vaccine-shipments-from-denmark>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/world-map.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/us-map.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/monkeypox-bronx-permanent-sexual-health-clinic/>

The public health system in America is profoundly broken. I believe the American people deserve a full investigation into how and why it is broken and what can be done to fix it. Following the failures of both COVID and Monkeypox, we cannot afford a repeat of history.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this matter, consistent with applicable agency guidelines. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ritchie" followed by a stylized flourish.

Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress