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**Sent:** Tuesday, October 18, 2022 9:32 AM  
**To:** HOPWA-L@HUDLIST.HUD.GOV  
**Subject:** HOPWA In Focus: Monkeypox

### **HOPWA In Focus: Monkeypox**

Dear HOPWA Grantees, Project Sponsors, and Friends,

There are now more than 27,000 confirmed monkeypox cases in the US, and cases are continuing to rise. Anyone can get monkeypox, however [data](#) is showing that gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men currently are being disproportionately affected by monkeypox. Further, data suggests that about 40% of people diagnosed with monkeypox in the US have HIV. [CDC does not know if HIV increases the likelihood of getting monkeypox](#), but we cannot ignore the overlap we are seeing between HIV and monkeypox.

[Monkeypox](#) is a virus that is spread through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact including direct contact with rashes or scabs on a person with monkeypox. Monkeypox can also spread through contact with respiratory secretions, or contact with objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that someone with monkeypox has used. [CDC advises](#) isolating at home and staying away from other people if you have monkeypox symptoms to prevent the spread to others.

As HOPWA providers, you are already reaching and interacting with a population that intersects with those who are now disproportionately affected by monkeypox. You have the tools to help people living with HIV access and maintain stable housing, and we can continue to employ those tools to address monkeypox. We also know stable housing provides a foundation from which people can participate in HIV prevention services and is associated with reductions in behaviors associated with getting or transmitting HIV. Housing is more important than ever to minimize exposure to monkeypox.

This is another situation where adopting “Sustainable Urgency” as a program component can help HOPWA programs be responsive to the monkeypox outbreak. We saw how nimble HOPWA providers were in balancing the need to provide necessary HOPWA housing and services while considering public health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage providers to continue streamlining processes and procedures for intake and assistance approval to ensure HIV housing and supportive services are reaching those in need. It is also important to look to community partners receiving [Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program](#) or [SAMHSA](#) funding to leverage needed medical, mental health, and substance use services for people living with HIV.

For HOPWA providers operating housing in [congregate living settings](#) such as community residences, you have extra considerations for minimizing exposure and the spread of monkeypox among residents. We encourage providers to consider whether there are best practices or HOPWA program flexibilities learned through the COVID-19 pandemic that could also be used with the monkeypox outbreak. [CDC](#) and [HUD](#) have both developed resources to help housing providers plan and respond to monkeypox in congregate living settings.

Finally, we have seen how stigma and discrimination continues to impede progress towards ending the HIV epidemic and we have an opportunity to [take a different approach with the monkeypox outbreak](#).

Science-based messaging about how monkeypox is contracted is essential. Unlike the early days of the HIV epidemic when we lacked information about the illness, monkeypox is a known illness in many parts of the world. As providers of HIV services, you know the importance of education to dispel stigma and discrimination. We encourage HOPWA providers to use available [CDC resources](#) to share information on monkeypox, including vaccines, with clients.

As we navigate another public health emergency, HUD continues to make technical assistance (TA) available to grantees to support HOPWA planning, program development, and problem-solving. HOPWA grantees in need of TA may submit an online request through the HUD Exchange at:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/technical-assistance/> HOPWA grantees and project sponsors may also ask program, policy and other questions through the HOPWA AAQ at: [HOPWA Ask A Question \(AAQ\) Portal](#)

We see the hard work being done to support low-income people with HIV and their families, and we know the past few years have brought additional challenges. We see you continuing to do your best to provide HOPWA housing and services. As always, thank you for your continued support of the HOPWA program and ending the HIV epidemic.

Respectfully,  
Rita Harcrow (she/her)  
Director, Office of HIV/AIDS Housing



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*Housing is a structural intervention in ending the AIDS epidemic in the United States. Each year, HOPWA ensures housing stability for more than 100,000 American households that are low-income and living with HIV.*

*Want to know more about HOPWA? Go to [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/hopwa](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/hopwa)*

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