

U.S. declares monkeypox a public health emergency

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The Biden administration on Thursday declared the monkeypox outbreak a public health emergency, a move intended to dramatically ramp up the fight against the spread of the virus.

"We're prepared to take our response to the next level in addressing this virus, and we urge every American to take monkeypox seriously and to take responsibility to help us tackle this virus," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said during a media briefing on Thursday.

The new declaration is expected to increase public awareness and education around monkeypox, give [public health officials](#) greater flexibility in deploying manpower and resources, and increase testing and data tracking of cases, said Rochelle Walensky, M.D., director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The emergency declaration has also prompted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to seriously weigh a "dose-sparing" approach for Jynneos, the only vaccine approved to protect against

monkeypox, FDA Commissioner Robert Califf, M.D., announced at Thursday's briefing.

Estimates suggest there are as many as 1.7 million people at the highest risk for contracting monkeypox right now, Walensky said. These include people living with HIV and gay and bisexual men, who constitute the "population we have been most focused on in terms of vaccination," Walensky added.

Under dose-sparing, doctors would perform a shallow injection between the layers of the skin—an intradermal shot—rather than the usual subcutaneous injection, Califf said. "There are some advantages to intradermal administration, including an improved [immune response](#) to the vaccine," Califf added, promising that the FDA will make a final decision on the move "probably within the next few days."

Such a move would require Becerra to make a second emergency declaration that would allow [federal officials](#) to expedite potential treatments and vaccines without going through full-fledged federal reviews, Califf said.

Officials also hope the declaration will put pressure on local jurisdictions to expand data sharing with the CDC, "so that we can have comprehensive and timely data available to inform public health decisions," Walensky said. Walensky noted that 51 U.S. jurisdictions already have agreed to share data on monkeypox cases and vaccine administration.

More information: [More Information](#)

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