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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Thomas, A. Golden, Jr. *TA*

**FROM:** Lisa Golden, Director of Health and Human Services

**DATE:** October 4, 2022

**SUBJECT:** MOTION RESPONSE – 9/27/22 - C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Work With The Appropriate Department To Address The Monkey Pox Virus And The City's Strategy For The Outbreak.

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Monkeypox is a rare viral disease that can occur and spread amongst humans and certain other animals. Beginning in May 2022, a significant volume of monkeypox cases have been reported in countries that do not normally have them, including the United States. The first case of monkeypox virus was identified in Massachusetts on May 18, 2022. The outbreak was declared a national health emergency by the Biden administration in August. According to data published by the CDC, as of September 27, 2022, there were 390 confirmed cases of monkeypox in Massachusetts. To date, confirmed cases in Lowell remain limited.

The Health Department has closely monitored information and guidance related to the status of monkeypox in our region since the onset of the outbreak. The Department's Public Health Nurses and other key staff participate frequent briefings with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to remain apprised of any developments pertaining to the ongoing outbreak and strategies for preventing transmission.

Like other communicable diseases, when a Lowell resident tests positive for monkeypox virus, the Health Department's Public Health Nurses are alerted of the new case through MAVEN (the state's electronic disease surveillance system). A nurse will then contact the individual to conduct contact tracing and provide guidance on prevention practices. Health Department staff attempts to remain in communication with the patient throughout the course of their disease to provide information and resources.

In addition to Public Health Nursing staff, the state has authorized the epidemiologist and contract tracers hired by the City through the COVID-19 contact tracing grant to work on monkeypox response efforts if needed.

There are currently two vaccines licensed by the FDA available for prevention monkeypox infection. The most commonly used vaccine is JYNNEOS. Vaccine supplies are limited in the United States, currently there are 14 locations around Massachusetts offering monkeypox vaccines to eligible individuals who live or work in Massachusetts. The closest location offering vaccinations is Greater Lawrence Family Health Center in Lawrence. More information regarding vaccine eligibility and appointments is available from [DPH](#).

The Health Department created a webpage in August containing general information and resources related to monkeypox virus, and will continue to update it periodically as the situation develops. The webpage is available at: [lowellma.gov/1694/Monkeypox-Information](http://lowellma.gov/1694/Monkeypox-Information)