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**Sent:** Wednesday, October 26, 2022 2:21 PM  
**To:** HOPWA-L@HUDLIST.HUD.GOV  
**Subject:** In Focus: MMWR Severe Monkeypox (MPX) Study

## **In Focus: MMWR Severe Monkeypox (MPX) Study**

The first Monkeypox (MPX) case in the United States was confirmed on May 17, 2022, and after a significant rise in cases, MPX was declared a public health emergency in the United States on August 4, 2022. New data is showing that the current MPX outbreak is disproportionately affecting people living with HIV and those experiencing homelessness. This is the same population that meets eligibility requirements for assistance through HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) and Homeless Assistance programs.

The latest publication of the [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on October 26, 2022 provides evidence through a study that people with HIV and people experiencing homelessness are highly impacted with the most severe cases of MPX. Of the sample of people with severe MPX disease, 82% were people with HIV and 23% were people experiencing homelessness. Further, 72% of the severe MPX cases among people with HIV had <50 CD4 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. A person with HIV is considered to have progressed to AIDS when their CD4 cells drop below 200 CD4 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. A CD4 cell count of <50 CD4 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> indicates a badly damaged immune system and is a likely sign that a person with HIV is not maintaining an HIV medication regimen. In this study, just 9% of these patients were taking antiretrovirals at the time of their MPX diagnosis. [The full study can be accessed here.](#)

To prevent and mitigate cases of severe MPX, we need to get people housed, linked to HIV care and treatment, protected through MPX vaccination, and connected to needed supportive services including mental health and substance use services. Housing can and should be used as a platform to get individuals who have disengaged from HIV care to reconnect, and to ensure an HIV medication regimen can be maintained. Both HOPWA and the Homeless Assistance programs, such as the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Programs, can fund housing and supportive services for individuals most vulnerable to MPX infection and severe health outcomes. Individuals and families who have HIV and who experience homelessness are eligible for assistance under the CoC and ESG programs. HOPWA funding can be used to provide assistance for individuals or families experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness with the only eligibility requirements being that the family is low-income and has at least one member who is living with HIV. We encourage communities to learn which HUD funding sources are currently available to reach those most vulnerable to MPX infection and severe health outcomes. In addition to traditional HOPWA and Homeless Assistance programs funding, both annual ESG Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (ESG-CV) and HOPWA CARES Act (HOPWA-CV) funds designated to prevent,

prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 can be used to pay for several MPX-related costs.

We can get people housed, linked to HIV care and treatment, protected through MPX vaccines, and connected to needed supportive services including mental health and substance use services by using all the resources we have available. This includes resources from HUD and partners at [HRSA's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program](#), [SAMHSA](#), or [CDC](#) for needed medical, mental health, and substance use services for people living with HIV. Following are examples of how to use HOPWA and Homeless Assistance programs to serve those most vulnerable to MPX infection and severe health outcomes.

- Immediate link to housing through hotel or motel vouchers
  - HOPWA: HOPWA funds (formula, competitive, and CARES Act) can be used to pay for a hotel or motel voucher for HOPWA-eligible individual or family who is homeless or in immediate need of housing support to stabilize the individual and get them connected to HIV care, MPX vaccination, supportive services, and stable housing. Generally, HUD recommends that grantees and project sponsors limit hotel/motel stays under HOPWA to no more than 60 days in a six-month period.
  - ESG: Annual ESG funds not used to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 can be used to pay for a hotel or motel voucher for a family or individual with a contagious disease if no appropriate emergency shelter is available. See [Notice CPD-21-08](#) for additional ways that ESG-CV can be used to support MPX response efforts, including funding for isolation in non-congregate shelter spaces.
  
- Eligible activities to prepare for and respond to infectious diseases including MPX
  - HOPWA: [Using HOPWA Program Funds for Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response \(hud.gov\)](#)
  - ESG: [Eligible ESG Program Costs for Infectious Disease Preparedness \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
  - CoC: [Using CoC Program Funds for Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
  
- Related Resources for MPX
  - [Infectious Disease Prevention and Response](#) page on the HUD Exchange
  - [Infectious Disease Toolkit for CoCs](#) provides guidance for planning and responding to infectious diseases

We join CDC and our federal colleagues in a call to action: We need to continue an aggressive and comprehensive approach to address MPX, HIV, sexually transmitted infection (STI), homelessness, and mental health together. HIV prevention and care mitigates the impact of MPX on the health of individuals living with or at-risk for both infections. And linkage to HIV

care and treatment is critical to protect individuals from a variety of health threats, including MPX.

If your community needs assistance navigating a response to a current MPX outbreak, technical assistance (TA) is available to support planning, program development, and problem-solving. Grantees and other stakeholders in need of TA may submit an online request through the HUD Exchange at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/technical-assistance/> Grantees, sub-recipients, and project sponsors may also ask program, policy and other questions through the [Ask A Question \(AAQ\) portal](#).

Respectfully,

Jemine Bryon (she/her)  
Acting General Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development

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

Norm Suchar (he/him)  
Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs



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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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