

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

August 29, 2022

Contact:

Redmond Haskins
Director of Media Relations
The Legal Aid Society
rhaskins@legal-aid.org
(929) 441-2384

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Legal Aid Calls on NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for Transparency Regarding Monkeypox Vaccine Access in New York City Jails

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, in a recently issued [letter](#), [condemned](#) the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) over the lack of transparency regarding actions the Department has taken to provide Monkeypox vaccines to people incarcerated in New York City jails.

The letter - addressed to DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani and Chief Equity Officer Dr. K. Torian Easterling - comes after repeated unanswered requests by Legal Aid for a meeting to discuss the availability of the Monkeypox vaccine and the measures being taken to ensure that the incarcerated people in the New York City Department of Correction's care are protected from the virus.

Legal Aid called on the DOHMH to answer the following questions:

1. How many vaccine doses has NYC DOHMH provided to Correctional Health Services for pre-exposure vaccination?
2. How many vaccine doses has NYC DOHMH provided to Correctional Health Services for post-exposure vaccination?
3. What community education has NYC DOHMH provided to incarcerated New Yorkers about orthopox disease, and how to protect oneself in a carceral setting?

“For weeks, we have sought basic information from DOHMH on how it plans to protect our incarcerated clients from Monkeypox, but have yet to receive any answers,” said **Tina Luongo, chief attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “This is especially problematic given the City’s documented inability to ensure that incarcerated New Yorkers have access to medical care. We hope that DOHMH will finally provide us clarity on this critically important and urgent issue.”

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For 145 years, we have protected defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org