

Senator Eddie Melton
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Committees:
Appropriations RMM
Education and Career Development
Health and Provider Services
Rules and Legislative Procedure
School Funding Subcommittee

August 3, 2022

Kristina Box, MD, FACOG
State Health Commissioner
2 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dr. Box,

I am writing to express my concerns and request information about the growing monkeypox outbreak occurring across our country.

Following the recent COVID-19 pandemic, many of my constituents are understandably concerned about the possibility of another viral outbreak. Over the past week, individuals have reached out to my office to request information about the spread of monkeypox in Indiana and how to stay safe from the disease. I am also concerned about the economic impact that monkeypox could have on Hoosiers, especially given current inflationary pressures.

It is well documented that the impact of COVID-19 disparately affected minority communities.¹ It is my goal that our state can correct the trend of underrepresented communities being disparately impacted during public health emergencies by providing the tools, resources, and knowledge base necessary to combat the virus through an equitable response.

As I am sure you are aware, several states have declared a public health emergency to combat the spread of the disease in recent days—including California, New York, and Illinois, our neighboring state.² The recent announcement of Illinois' public health emergency is especially concerning, given its close proximity to Gary. I have several questions about Indiana's response: What measures are being taken in Indiana at this time to address the potential spread of monkeypox? Could your office please provide data about reported cases at both the statewide level and those located in my district? Additionally, what steps can individuals take to stay safe and stop further spread? I would sincerely request that your office keep in regular communication with legislators on updates to the outbreak as it develops and constituents seek care.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7015e2.htm>

² <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2022/08/01/74502/>

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-declares-state-disaster-emergency-response-ongoing-monkeypox-outbreak>

<https://www.illinois.gov/news/press-release.25247.html>

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Thank you for your consideration of my concerns. Your office provides an invaluable service to Hoosiers, and I am very appreciative of the Department of Health's hard work. I am certain that we can reduce transmissions across our state with an equitable response to the outbreak and by educating the public on how to stay safe. I would be happy to discuss this letter further at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Melton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "M".

Eddie Melton
Indiana State Senate
Senate District 3