President Biden Announces Team to Lead Monkeypox Response

New deputy coordinator Demetre Daskalakis has led the HIV response in New York City and nationwide.

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Today [August 2], President Biden named FEMA's Robert Fenton as the White House National Monkeypox Response Coordinator and Dr. Demetre Daskalakis as the White House National Monkeypox Response Deputy Coordinator. Fenton and Daskalakis will lead the Administration's strategy and operations to combat the current monkeypox outbreak, including equitably increasing the availability of tests, vaccinations and treatments.

Robert Fenton currently serves as Regional Administrator for FEMA Region 9 in the American West, with nearly 50 million people in his area of responsibility. One of the Nation's most experienced and effective emergency management leaders, Robert Fenton has twice served as Acting Administrator of FEMA and led multiple challenging prevention, response and recovery operations throughout his long and distinguished career, including for natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and complex humanitarian operations.

Demetre Daskalakis, a leading public health expert, is currently Director of the CDC Division of HIV Prevention. Widely known as a national expert on health issues affecting the LGBGQIA+ communities, his clinical practice has focused on providing care for the underserved LGBTQIA+ communities. He previously oversaw management of infectious diseases for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, one of the largest departments in the nation – including in serving as incident commander for the City's COVID-19 response.

Fenton and Daskalakis combined have over four decades of experience in Federal emergency response and public health leadership, including overseeing the operations and implementation of key components of the Biden Administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and leading local and Federal public health emergency efforts such as infectious disease control and HIV prevention. Both played critical roles in making COVID vaccines more accessible for underserved communities and closing the equity gap in adult vaccination rates, through the implementation and execution of FEMA mass vaccination sites in some of the country's most underserved communities, and working with trusted members of local communities to build vaccine confidence.

"We look forward to partnering with Bob Fenton and Demetre Dasklalakis as we work to end the

monkeypox outbreak in America," said U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra. "Bob's experience in federal and regional response coordination, and Demetre's vast knowledge of our public health systems' strengths and limits will be instrumental as we work to stay ahead of the virus and advance a whole-of-government response."

"Bob Fenton and Dr. Daskalakis are proven, effective leaders that will lead a whole of government effort to implement President Biden's comprehensive monkeypox response strategy with the urgency that this outbreak warrants," said Anthony Fauci, Chief Medical Advisor to the President. "From Bob's work at FEMA leading COVID-19 mass vaccination efforts and getting vaccines to underserved communities to Demetre's extensive experience and leadership on health equity and STD and HIV prevention, this team will allow the Biden Administration to further accelerate and strengthen its monkeypox response."

Fenton and Daskalakis will coordinate and manage response efforts across the White House and all Federal departments and agencies. They will work with local, state, national, and international stakeholders on tracking and fighting the spread of monkeypox, with state and local partners to ensure they have adequate supplies to test, treat and vaccinate at-risk individuals, with clinicians and providers on available testing, treatment and vaccination options, and with stakeholder communities on building public understanding of the virus and how to address it most effectively.

Since the first case of monkeypox was confirmed in the United States on May 18, the Biden-Harris Administration has had a comprehensive and aggressive strategy to combat the virus and protect individuals most at risk. The Administration has made over 1.1 million doses of vaccine available to states and cities across the country to control the spread of the virus, has expanded testing capacity from 6,000 tests per week to over 80,000 tests per week, and has communicated regularly with providers and local health departments encouraging them to utilize tests more often. The Administration has also made treatments more accessible for patients and providers, and has launched a robust outreach strategy to communicate with public health officials, providers, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community to increase awareness about the virus, as well as prevention, response, and treatment strategies. The Administration also recently launched its monkeypox research agenda, aiming to galvanize the international community to identify and address gaps in information on the virus to accelerate and strengthen the global response.

Over the coming weeks, under the leadership of Fenton and Daskalakis, the Administration will advance and accelerate the United States' monkeypox response to mitigate the spread of the virus, protect individuals most at risk of contracting the virus, and care for those who have been afflicted with it.

More information about Robert Fenton and Dr. Demetre Daskalakis is below:

Robert Fenton, White House National Monkeypox Response Coordinator

Robert Fenton serves as Regional Administrator for FEMA Region 9 in the American West, with nearly 50 million people in his area of responsibility. He has over 25 years' experience in Federal emergency response, including serving twice as Acting Administrator of FEMA, most recently

during the first months of the Biden-Harris Administration. As Acting Administrator during at the beginning of the Biden Administration, Fenton oversaw FEMA's mass vaccination operations, bringing vaccination sites to some of the country's most underserved communities. Fenton also served as Senior Response Official for Operation Allies Welcome, where he led efforts to resettle 76,000 Afghan evacuees on an unprecedented timeline.

Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, White House National Monkeypox Response Deputy Coordinator

Dr. Demetre Daskalakis serves as Director of the Division of HIV Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control, where he oversees HIV prevention efforts. Dr. Daskalakis worked in the CDC COVID-19 response as a lead in health equity as well as the head of the vaccine task force. Prior to joining the CDC, Dr. Daskalakis served as New York City Department of Health's Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Disease Control. In that role, Dr. Daskalakis oversaw many of New York City's HIV and STD education and response programs, which helped drive HIV incidence to an historic low and also served as Incident Commander during the COVID-19 and Measles outbreaks. He has authored over 60 scholarly articles and has been widely recognized for his expertise and advocacy for the health issues affecting the LGBTQIA+ communities.

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