

Two new monkeypox cases reported at Sterling Heights Assembly Plant

UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman demands emergency shutdown

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Two new cases of monkeypox have been reported at Stellantis' Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP) north of Detroit, a local independent news outlet has reported.

The new alleged cases follows the disclosure by sources, and reported on the *World Socialist Web Site* Sunday, of the first case. According to sources, workers were informed of the case, which occurred in the crowded General Assembly area, during team meetings last week, but management and the United Auto Workers have provided no further information and taken no measures to prevent the spread of the deadly, painful disease.

According to Metro Detroit Crime Report Facebook page, sources say that on both Monday and Tuesday workers were taken out of the plant on stretchers in what is believed to be due to cases of monkeypox. "As of now there are no plans to suspend production at SHAP due to the spread of Monkeypox," the report said.

The apparent spread of the disease at SHAP raises serious concerns of a looming outbreak throughout the Detroit area. Seven thousand workers are crammed into the plant, the largest workforce of all plants in the area. It is almost certain that more cases are in both SHAP and other plants, either undetected or being deliberately concealed by management and the UAW. This is their long-established modus operandi in response to COVID-19, where they have concealed the extent of cases in order to maintain production.

Monkeypox, which is caused by a virus closely related to smallpox, is a serious disease. It has a similar

fatality rate to COVID-19 and causes extremely painful symptoms, including skin lesions. Longstanding research has shown that monkeypox can spread through the air via aerosols, just as COVID-19 does. However, this long-established finding is being concealed from the public by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health institutions who are claiming falsely, instead, that it spreads mainly through sexual contact.

The cover-up of monkeypox comes as the CDC has also abandoned measures to contain COVID-19, where mass infections are treated as inevitable. On Thursday, the CDC issued new guidelines recommending an end to social distancing and quarantining measures for COVID-19, as well as an end to regular testing at schools. This abandonment of even basic public health measures is laying the groundwork for a public health catastrophe, particularly as schools reopen over the next month, as two pandemics now spread unchecked.

Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker running for the UAW presidency, said, "The new revelations raise serious concerns that this virus is spreading unchecked inside the factories. As I said in my Thursday statement, SHAP must be put on emergency shutdown, with full compensation for the workforce, in order to prevent the further spread. As long as monkeypox circulates inside of the factories it endangers not only autoworkers, but their families and the entire city of Detroit.

"Furthermore, my campaign demands a full public accounting of the spread of the virus. How many more cases are there at SHAP and other plants that management and the UAW know about, but are not

telling anyone? If they are not tracking cases, then that is only because they do not want to know. There must be a mass testing and contact tracing campaign, at Stellantis' expense, to stop the spread, and all workers exposed to the virus must be given paid time off to quarantine.

“Stellantis and the UAW won't do this on their own accord. As workers, our top priority is protecting lives, but their top priority is making pickup trucks and profit. Their hand must be forced by workers themselves. Workers should not forget that it was the courageous stand taken by workers at SHAP in March of 2020 which touched off a wildcat strike wave, forcing a two-month shutdown of the auto industry which saved countless lives. Autoworkers should form rank-and-file safety committees to demand workers' oversight over health and safety, including the right to shut production when there is an outbreak.”

For more information on the campaign of Will Lehman for UAW president, visit WillforUAWPresident.org.



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