BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
CHAIRMAN

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-3641
Minority (202) 225-2927

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie:

We are writing regarding your commitment during yesterday's Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health hearing to hold a hearing on the Trump Administration's cuts and reorganization at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and its components. We are concerned that these cuts have been made indiscriminately, without regard to the impact that they will have on the ability of HHS and its operating divisions to meet its statutory responsibilities and its obligations to the American people.

As you know, last week, Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. announced HHS would undergo a restructuring including consolidating HHS operating divisions with specific missions. He also announced that HHS would eliminate 10,000 jobs on top of the 10,000 public servants who have already been terminated or who have taken the deferred resignation program. Yesterday, "reduction in force" notices began going out to affected employees. Many HHS employees did not know they had been terminated until they attempted to scan their badge to enter the office for the day and were denied entry.

Congress created HHS's operating divisions such as the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Agency for Health Research and Quality in statute and gave them specific statutory mandates. It is up to Congress to authorize and oversee any changes to those mandates. It is also up to Congress to hold the Executive Branch accountable for its responsibility to faithfully execute the laws and maintain workforces that can fulfill agencies' missions as established in statute.

At yesterday's Health Subcommittee hearing, in reference to the Trump Administration's actions, you stated, "we have to have the proper oversight to make sure the things that Congress directs the Administration is in place." You went on to say that "it is also our responsibility…to make sure that our mission's accomplished and have the proper oversight to do that."

We call on you to fulfill this responsibility of Congress and of the Energy and Commerce Committee to exercise its oversight and hold hearings on the Trump Administration's unauthorized restructuring of HHS and termination of tens of thousands of civil servants. We believe this is of utmost importance and request you hold a hearing immediately with Secretary Kennedy to give him the opportunity to explain his plan to Congress, which holds the sole authority to undertake such a vast reorganization of HHS. The top bipartisan leaders of the Senate HELP Committee requested Secretary Kennedy to appear at a hearing next week, and our Committee must also have him before us to get answers on these massive layoffs and reorganization. We note that our multiple efforts to get HHS to provide a briefing on this matter and responses to our letters and questions have been ignored.

Moving forward, it is essential that the Committee conduct oversight of recent actions by HHS Secretary Kennedy and the Trump Administration to ensure we are maintaining and vigorously exercising Congress' Article I powers.

Sincerely,

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Diana DeGette
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
House Committee on Energy and Commerce