

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 17, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We write to you regarding the Reduction in Force (RIF) at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). It has been reported that numerous SAMHSA employees have been laid off, which is the latest in a series of actions that this administration has taken to weaken SAMHSA, a vital resource in the fight against the substance use and mental health epidemics.

Far too many American families have experienced the devastating impacts of the addiction and mental health crises. Instead of supporting our communities, the administration has repeatedly taken steps to eliminate resources from those who need them most. Our understanding is that more than 100 employees have been laid off, a significant divestment in SAMHSA's workforce that will be detrimental to the program's ability to distribute resources and support community organizations.

SAMHSA has served as a critical lifeline for countless individuals, advancing prevention efforts—including the distribution of naloxone—while also supporting comprehensive treatment and recovery services. It has played a key role in building the 988 National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, expanding peer support networks, and enhancing crisis care coordination. Additionally, SAMHSA has extended vital prevention, treatment, and recovery resources to Americans living with mental health and substance use disorders, including those in underserved rural areas and communities impacted by disasters.¹

This RIF comes on the heels of a series of actions taken by the administration to defund SAMHSA. The Department's dangerous vision to combine SAMHSA with other divisions to create the Administration for a Healthy America will dilute the program's impact on addiction and mental health.² HHS's 10 regional offices, which include SAMHSA offices, have been

¹ <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/06/06/nx-s1-5424670/rfk-jr-samhsa-mental-health-addiction-overdose-trump-budget-cuts>

² <https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/hhs-restructuring-doge.html>

consolidated into four and SAMHSA's staff had already been significantly reduced before the latest RIF. These cuts weaken our ability to respond to crises and save lives.

From the cancelation of a suicide and drug addiction prevention summit to the halting of the construction of a mental health crisis center, our constituents' health is hanging in the balance.³ This administration's decision to dismantle SAMHSA has been executed without regard for the communities that will be harmed. We urge you to reverse your decision to lay off these workers and reinstate them immediately. We must return these employees to their lifesaving work.

Given the urgency of the matter, we also ask that you provide the following information by October 31, 2025.

1. Describe, in detail, the reorganization of SAMHSA, the justification for such reorganization, and how many employees remain in each Center, office and division. For each change either by reorganization and/or staff reduction, please provide a comparison to staffing prior to January 20, 2025, and how proposed changes will improve the ability of the Department to carry out its authorized and funded activities.
2. Does SAMHSA retain its own grant making function as statutorily required or does that now go through HRSA?
3. When will SAMHSA disseminate information to stakeholders (Advisory Committees, grantees, Congress, and others) about the new staffing configuration?
4. It has been reported that the entire Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) team was laid off. Please delineate each Center, office and division in which staffing has been reduced more than 50 percent compared to January 20, 2025, and expected impacts on Congressionally mandated activities.

We thank you for your attention and consideration of this request, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

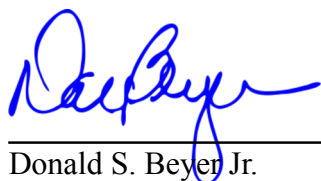


Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2025/06/19/samhsa-addiction-mental-health-cuts/>



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



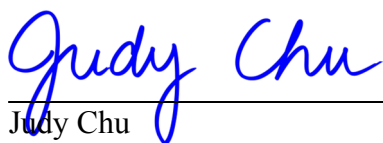
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



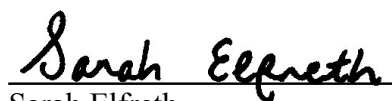
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



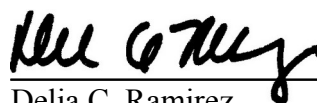
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



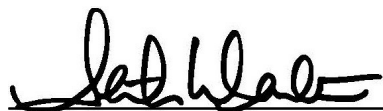
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



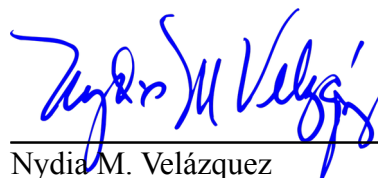
Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



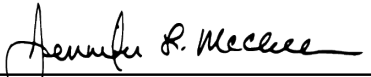
Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



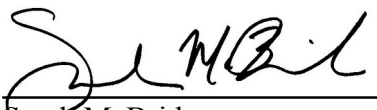
Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



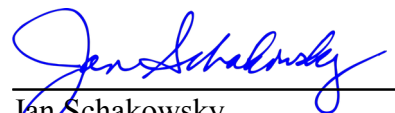
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



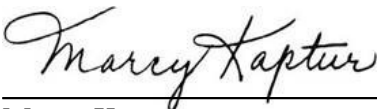
Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



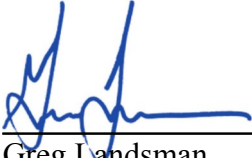
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



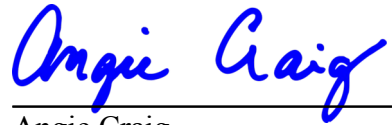
Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



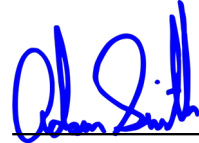
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



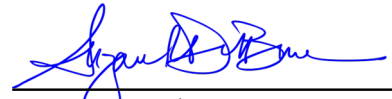
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress