

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

As longtime champions of access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment and resources, we are writing in response to the disturbing news that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) arbitrarily and illegally fired over 100 additional employees at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). **Reports indicate that the latest round of firings has reduced the SAMHSA workforce to less than half of what it was at the start of the Trump Administration.** These cuts fly in the face of everything Congress has worked on to prioritize the focus on mental health and substance use disorder, to reduce stigma and to expand access to prevention, recovery and treatment.

Disturbingly, this latest round of senseless firings was carried out on Friday, October 10, 2025, which is World Mental Health Day. We already were truly alarmed by the initial firings made in April of 2025, where SAMHSA lost 10 percent of its staff. As you well know, we are currently in the midst of a nationwide overdose and mental health crisis; one that has impacted every community in some form. Addressing mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment and recovery is a bipartisan priority and now is not the time to make more heinous cuts to SAMHSA. **The work of SAMHSA is not a partisan priority. It should be a priority for every American, every member of Congress and every Administration.**

Every state relies on SAMHSA funding to respond to these pressing mental health and addiction challenges. From October of 2023 to September of 2024, overdose deaths in the United States decreased by nearly 24 percent, reversing a nearly two decade upward trend. This progress is due, in large part, to the critical work of SAMHSA staff, who have been instrumental in supporting and sustaining this decline. Whether its training providers on evidence-based addiction medical treatment or providing lifesaving naloxone or launching prevention or recovery efforts or supporting 988, SAMHSA saves lives.

Additionally, we are concerned by reports that the Administration is taking steps to stop SAMHSA from serving its statutorily approved role as an independent agency. HHS

continues to claim (as recently as yesterday) that it is not implementing a reorganization plan and will send any plans to Congress in advance of a reorganization effort. However, there are reports that SAMHSA no longer has an independent Human Resources office, Information Technology Office, Government Relations and Regulatory Office. Additionally, we have heard from several individuals that SAMHSA no longer has its own grant making function.

Let's not forget that the whole reason Congress moved SAMHSA into an independent agency was to ensure that mental health and substance use disorder treatment was prioritized despite the longstanding stigma. Protecting SAMHSA and mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment and recovery funding is essential to ensuring that millions of Americans continue to have access to critical mental health and substance use services. The combination of Friday's firings and earlier decimation of the SAMHSA workforce undermines the lifesaving expertise and funding that flows through SAMHSA.

We strongly urge you to return all SAMHSA employees to their workplace immediately, so they can continue to serve the American people and carry out SAMHSA's lifesaving mission. Too many people across the country are suffering without necessary resources. We must ensure that SAMHSA staff are there to ensure those lifesaving resources reach our communities. Given the urgency, we ask that you provide the following information by October 31, 2025.

1. How many employees will still work at SAMHSA following the latest RIFs?
2. Describe, in detail, the reorganization of SAMHSA, the justification for such reorganization, and how many employees remain in each Center, office and division.
3. How many employees worked at SAMHSA on Day 1 of the Trump Administration?
4. How many employees remained at SAMHSA prior to the October 10th RIFs?
5. How many people were included in the RIFs from SAMHSA on Friday, October 10th?
6. How many employees were fired from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)? How many will remain after the latest round of RIFs?
7. How many employees were fired from the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)? How many will remain after the latest round of RIFs?
8. How many employees were fired from the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)? In particular, please provide breakdowns by Division (Children and School Mental Health etc.) How many will remain after the latest round of RIFs?
6. Has the Administration taken steps to reorganize SAMHSA under Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) or Administration for Health America (AHA) or does it remain a fully independent agency as required by statute and as directed by Congress?
7. Who does the highest-ranking employee at SAMHSA report to?

8. Does SAMHSA retain its own grant making function or does that now go through HRSA?
9. When will SAMHSA disseminate information to stakeholders (Advisory Committees, grantees, Congress, and others) about the new staffing configuration?
10. Does SAMHSA have an independent Human Resources office, Information Technology Office, Government Relations and Regulatory Office?
11. Does SAMHSA continue to have its own grant making function or has that been moved to HRSA?
12. Does SAMHSA continue to fund all statutorily required programs? If not, which ones are not funded as required by statute?
13. What is the latest status of funding for programs funded under the Programs of Regional and National Significance (PRNS)?

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

Sincerely,



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress