



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20201

TO: Heads of Operating Divisions Head
Heads of Staff Divisions

THROUGH: Wilma M. Robinson, Ph.D., Deputy Executive Secretary

FROM: Dorothy A. Fink, MD, Acting Secretary

DATE: January 21, 2025

SUBJECT: Immediate Pause on Issuing Documents and Public Communications – ACTION


As the new Administration considers its plan for managing the federal policy and public communications processes, it is important that the President's appointees and designees have the opportunity to review and approve any regulations, guidance documents, and other public documents and communications (including social media). Therefore, at the direction of the new Administration and consistent with precedent, I am directing that you immediately take the following steps through February 1, 2025:

1. Refrain from sending any document intended for publication to the Office of the Federal Register until it has been reviewed and approved by a Presidential appointee. Please note that the Office of the Executive Secretary (Exec Sec) withdrew from OFR all documents that had not been published in the Federal Register to allow for such review and approval.
2. Refrain from publicly issuing any document (e.g., regulation, guidance, notice, grant announcement) or communication (e.g., social media, websites, press releases, and communication using listservs) until it has been reviewed and approved by a Presidential appointee.
3. Refrain from participating in any public speaking engagement until the event and material have been reviewed and approved by a Presidential appointee.
4. Coordinate with Presidential appointees prior to issuing official correspondence to public officials (e.g., members of Congress, governors) or containing interpretations or statements of Department regulations or policy. Nothing in this guidance is intended to limit an employee's personal correspondence with members of Congress or other third parties, including an employee's whistleblower protected communications.
5. Notify Exec Sec promptly of any documents or communications that you believe should not be subject to the directives in paragraphs 1-4 because they are required by statute or litigation; affect critical health, safety, environmental, financial, or national security functions of the Department; or for some other reason. Please provide the title, a brief summary, the target release date, and the rationale for expedited release to your Exec Sec Policy Coordinator.

The President's appointees intend to review documents and communications expeditiously and return to a more regular process as soon as possible.

If you identify any actions taken inconsistent with these requests, please know they shall not be considered impliedly ratified. These items should be immediately withdrawn or rescinded to deem them as void and without effect.

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring a smooth transition consistent with our nation's democratic principles.



Dorothy A. Fink, MD, Acting Secretary