

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 28, 2025

Robert Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Secretary Kennedy:

I write to express my deep concerns over the recent reports that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has removed key Information Technology (IT) and cybersecurity personnel and leadership, leaving critical infrastructure unprotected and unmaintained. I'm concerned the elimination of these key staff was made without clear justification or regard to the risk to cybersecurity, network and system functionality, and the potential for Americans' health data to go unprotected.

As the second-largest department in the federal government, staff across HHS manage complex and large networks and systems, requiring specialized IT personnel. In addition, agencies across HHS collect and aggregate a vast amount of sensitive data, including Americans' personal health data and valuable medical research and trade secrets. Staff within the Office of Civil Rights are responsible for data breach investigations and enforcement, including helping healthcare organizations improve cybersecurity and data security practices.

The reported removal of staff from tech offices across HHS is highly disturbing, as these staff were responsible for managing essential networks and systems, public-facing websites, enterprise services, and cybersecurity contracts. Removing IT and cybersecurity staff threatens the basic functionality of HHS systems and networks as well as the ability for the Department to protect its IT assets and the vast amounts of data it holds.

Recent reports indicate the staff responsible for managing hundreds of HHS cybersecurity contractors, including those who work at the Computer Security Incident Response Center (CSIRC), have been removed. Without qualified cybersecurity staff in place, HHS networks will go unprotected against cyber threats, which could enable malicious actors to access departmental data, clinical trial information, and the sensitive, personal health data of millions of Americans.

As such, I request you respond to the following questions by no later than May 19, 2025:

1. Please provide the current staffing levels for every Office of the Chief Information Officer.
2. Please provide the current staffing levels for offices responsible for any of the following: information technology, cybersecurity, enterprise systems and services (including contracts), website and hotline management, and technology strategy.

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- a. Please provide the number of employees that were terminated because of the Reduction in Force (RIF) issued on April 1, 2025, in each of these offices.
 - b. Please provide the number of employees in these offices who were offered and accepted early retirement, deferred resignation, or any other severance offer since January 20, 2025.
 - c. Please provide the number of probationary employees that were terminated from these offices since January 20, 2025, and how many were reinstated.
 - d. Please provide the number of probationary employees in these offices that are currently on administrative leave.
3. Please provide a detailed explanation of how the removal of Senior Executive Service staff from the HHS Office of the Chief Information Officer meet the criteria of “redundant or unnecessary administrative” positions.
4. Reports indicate a number of HHS offices that had IT responsibilities have been eliminated completely or have had their staff significantly reduced. How many offices with IT responsibilities have been eliminated?
 - a. For eliminated offices, please indicate what organizational subdivision within HHS is now responsible for completing the duties of offices that have been eliminated. Please provide current staffing levels for the subdivisions.
5. What office is responsible for renewing contracts for contractors working at CSIRC?
 - a. Please list how many staff are employed in that office and the names of those specifically responsible for renewing CSIRC contracts.
6. Please provide all documents related to assessing the impact of HHS IT workforce reductions.
7. Please provide a detailed description of how HHS plans to manage the impact of workforce reductions on maintaining 1) system functionality, 2) digital infrastructure security, 3) the distinct missions of HHS’s individual agencies and services, and 4) clear guidance to current employees on which employees, teams, and offices are responsible for duties previously held by employees and offices eliminated under this Administration.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
United States Senate