



Leadership Council
of Aging Organizations

Debra Whitman, Chair

March 28, 2025

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

Re: HHS Transformation to Make America Healthy Again

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

On behalf of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), I am writing to express our concerns regarding the potential impacts to supports for older adults as you restructure the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. LCAO is a coalition of 68 national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older adult population and is committed to representing their interests in policymaking arenas.

In particular, as you consider the future of programs administered by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), we urge you to prioritize the continued efficient, effective and coordinated delivery of services to older adults and people with disabilities. Older adults and people with disabilities rely upon these programs to be able to remain at home and in the community, understand and access their Medicare and Medicaid benefits, age with maximum health and wellness, stay safe and free from abuse, and to support their family caregivers who enable older adults to stay out of more costly long-term-care institutions.

Our country needs an even greater focus on older adults as our aging population grows at the greatest pace in our nation's history, and we cannot lose the progress that has already been made. The Assistant Secretary for Aging role, which is a Senate-confirmed position, is a critical voice to champion issues unique to older adults and ensure the Administration can improve the health of Americans of all ages.

We also note that ACL has served a key leadership role across the Executive branch on aging issues, ensuring the federal government is preventing duplication and creating innovation across its agencies all the while leveraging state, local and community-based organizations to deliver cost effective services to older and disabled people. Examples of this coordination include the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, and the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Healthy Aging and Age-Friendly Communities.

We urge you to provide clarity on several questions:

- How will this reorganization serve your goal of healthy aging?
- How will ACL's existing crucial aging programs be implemented and advanced within this new organizational structure?
- How will the changes affect the Assistant Secretary for Aging role and responsibilities?
- What steps are being taken to ensure programs and services that older adults depend on, including but not limited to Meals on Wheels, health and wellness programs delivered in senior centers, support and training for family caregivers, among others, will not be impacted during this transition?
- How are you monitoring any potential impacts on people at the local level and what safeguards are in place to protect against any negative effect on programs?
- How will these changes affect the funding, staffing and prioritization of services to older adults who wish to remain within their homes and communities?

As you begin the transformation of HHS, we urge you to ensure older Americans continue to have uninterrupted access to the services and supports they need to age with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities.

We would welcome a discussion on your vision for these essential programs and services supporting older adults in every community across the country and what we can collectively do to improve the health and independence of all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra Whitman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debra Whitman