



## Public Health Infrastructure in Crisis

### HHS Workforce Cuts, Reorganizations, and Funding Reductions: Impacts and Solutions

Proposed federal funding cuts, clawbacks of approved funds, layoffs and hiring freezes, and agency reorganizations across Health and Human Services (HHS) will dramatically impact health departments across the country, according to a new report. These steps could contribute to increased healthcare spending and reduced life expectancy.

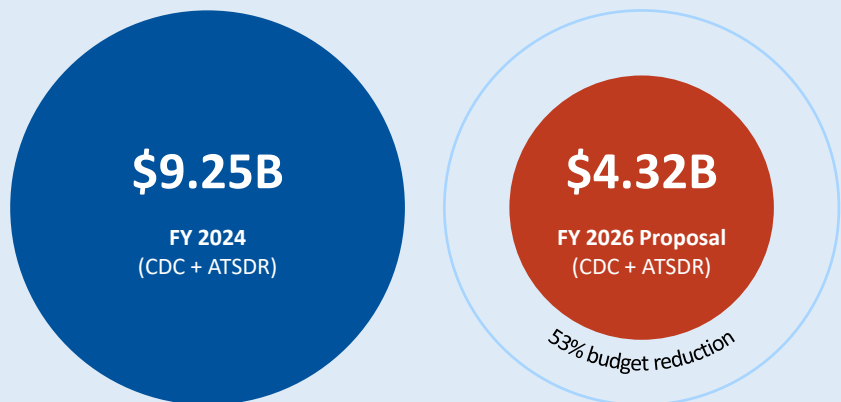
**Public Health Infrastructure in Crisis: HHS Workforce Cuts, Reorganizations, and Funding Reductions**, a new report released by Trust for America's Health (TFAH),<sup>1</sup> concludes these actions will impact the health of all Americans. These steps will significantly weaken the nation's public health system and emergency readiness and could endanger the country's health and economic security.

Read the report here:

<https://www.tfah.org/report-details/funding-report-2025>

#### CDC Faces \$5 Billion Cut Under FY 2026 Budget Plan

##### The proposal would eliminate key public health centers



Note: Figures represent program-level funding, which includes budget authority, Prevention and Public Health Fund transfers, and other funding streams. Portions of eliminated CDC funding would be transferred to the proposed Administration for a Healthy America.

Sources: FY 2024 CDC and ATSDR Operating Plans and FY 2026 HHS Budget in Brief



## The report documents and analyzes the impacts of current and proposed actions impacting federal public health, including:

### 01 FY 2026 Budget Proposal



- > The President's proposed FY 2026 budget for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR) amounts to a **53 percent reduction in funding** compared to FY 2024.
  - > CDC's Public Health Emergency Preparedness program faces a **52 percent funding reduction**.
- > **Over 100 public health programs and funding lines** would be eliminated under the President's proposed FY 2026 budget, including:
  - > **61 programs** at CDC, such as programs to address diabetes, heart disease, and smoking.
  - > **40 programs** at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, including local programs that prevent overdose and suicide.
- > **More than 80% of CDC's domestic budget** goes to external partners – cuts will significantly reduce services across the country.

<sup>1</sup> TFAH is a non-partisan, non-profit organization focused on public health research and policy.

## 02 Proposed HHS Agencies Reorganization and Workforce Reductions



- > Uncertainty about the continuity and effectiveness of public health programs, separation of collaborative programs; and whether transferred funding would include experts, grant programs, research, and surveillance systems.
- > Would reduce the number of staff positions across HHS by **16 percent**. Due to 2025 workforce cuts at CDC, there has been disrupted support for local responses to lead poisoning, measles, and other crises. CDC experts support state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments during emergencies and in response to ongoing health challenges.

## 03 FY 2025 Funding Cuts and Delays



- > The federal government canceled over **\$12 billion in COVID-19 era grants** – funding that was intended to strengthen public health infrastructure for future health threats.
- > Delays and clawbacks of FY 2025 funding have led to program cuts at health departments, including maternal and infant health, mental health, vaccine access, and smoking cessation.

## 04 Recommendations for Congress and the Administration:



- > Congress and the administration should restore federal health agencies, funding, and workforces that were cut in 2025.
- > Congress and the administration should maintain and strengthen the structure and capabilities of federal health agencies, which have specific, complementary, and distinct roles and expertise in protecting the nation's health.
- > Congress, in collaboration with federal agencies and outside experts and partners, should lead a bipartisan, deliberative process of reviewing proposals for federal health agency restructuring or development of new agencies.
- > Congress and the administration should strengthen CDC as a national, comprehensive public health agency with responsibilities across the detection, prevention, and mitigation of the leading causes of preventable death, illness, and injury.
- > Federal agencies must spend all funds appropriated by Congress, as required by law, and OMB should release full-year funds to agencies after enactment of appropriations legislation.
- > Congress should enact full-year appropriations bills for HHS and its agencies and operating divisions.
- > Congress and the administration should implement evidence-based processes to identify inefficiencies and enhance the effectiveness of federal public health services, such as improving the efficiency of disbursement of federal funds, program evaluation and data collection, and enabling flexibility when needed.
- > Congress should reject new discretionary budgetary caps.
- > Congress should ensure continuous improvement of the nation's public health infrastructure, capabilities, and essential services, including workforce, laboratories, and data systems at all levels.

