

# The Disability and Aging Collaborative

March 28, 2025

Secretary Robert Kennedy  
The US Department of Health & Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

## **RE: HHS Announcement on Restructuring Key Agencies**

The undersigned members of the Disability and Aging Collaborative (DAC) write with extreme concern about the announcement yesterday from Secretary Robert Kennedy about the destruction of several vital agencies that support aging adults, disabled people of all ages, caregivers, and care workers. The DAC is a coalition of organizations that work together to advance long-term services and support policy at the federal level. Formed in 2009, the DAC was one of the first coordinated efforts to bring together disability, aging, and labor organizations.

On behalf of the constituencies that we represent, DAC organizational members are deeply troubled by the announcement from HHS that it intends to split the important work of the Administration for Community Living (ACL) across several other agencies, cutting staff and diluting critical programs, and impacting other programs across HHS--such as programs within NIH, HRSA, and CDC that impact people with disabilities--that will be further pushed to the sidelines.

The ACL administers programs, research, and services that are vital to the health and wellbeing of older adults and people with disabilities. It plays an essential role in coordinating access to long-term services and supports that enable people to live independently with dignity in their homes and communities. By managing and distributing federal funding for services such as home care, nutrition assistance, and caregiver support, ACL ensures that older adults and people with disabilities can meet their most basic needs. At a time when the vast majority of aging adults and nearly all disabled people want to live in their communities, this change threatens to increase rates of institutionalization, homelessness, and long-lasting economic hardship.

This drastic measure also disregards and undermines the purpose of ACL, which was created in 2012 to create efficiencies and prevent duplication of efforts among aging and disability networks - now an outcome at significant risk. ACL serves as a hub

across HHS and with other Departments to coordinate services and supports critical services to disabled people and older adults, such as Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS), Independent Living Services (ILS), the Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center and affordable housing, facilitating federal, state, and local cross-sector partnerships focused on efficient use of limited resources. ACL has coordinated many interagency initiatives like the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers and the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Healthy Aging and Age-Friendly Communities.

Yesterday's announcement offers no guarantees that these essential functions will continue. DAC is also concerned by the proposed cuts to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an organization that is specifically focused on advancing care and improving the lives of people with mental health and substance use conditions. Such cuts could put the lives of people with these conditions at risk. This development comes amidst other alarming threats, including proposed cuts to Medicaid. This announcement represents a continued affront to the programs that support older adults and people with disabilities, and cannot move forward.

We urge you to reconsider this plan. The DAC stands ready to work with the administration to strengthen the programs and agencies that support aging adults and disabled people and the paid and unpaid caregivers who support them. For additional information or questions, feel free to contact DAC co-chairs Nicole Jorwic ([nicole@caringacross.org](mailto:nicole@caringacross.org)), Natalie Kean ([nkean@justiceinaging.org](mailto:nkean@justiceinaging.org)), and John Poulos ([jpoulos@autisticadvocacy.org](mailto:jpoulos@autisticadvocacy.org)).

Sincerely,

ADAPT National  
ADAPT Montana  
ADAPT of Texas  
Allies for Independence  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Network of Community Options and Resources  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Care in Action  
Caring Across Generations  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
Center for Public Representation  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
CommunicationFIRST

Community Catalyst  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)  
Disability Social History Project  
Diverse Elders Coalition  
DQIA (Disabled Queers in Action)  
Georgia ADAPT  
Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network  
IEC (Institute for Exceptional Care)  
Justice in Aging  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Little Lobbyists  
MomsRising  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare  
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Health Law Program  
New Disabled South  
North Central Texas Council of Governments' Area Agency on Aging  
Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas  
PHI  
REV UP Texas  
RISE Center for Independent Living  
Service Employees International Union(SEIU)  
TASH  
Well Spouse Association