

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Reckless closure of Department of Health and Human Services Region 1 Office

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We write today to express our dismay about the sudden closure of the entire Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Regional Office (RO) in Boston, Massachusetts, on April 1, 2025. For decades, this office has worked with officials in our state and the five others in the New England region to serve 15 million people, including 3.4 million Medicare beneficiaries, 3.6 million Medicaid enrollees, nearly a million Social Services Block Grant beneficiaries, 428,000 families receiving child support services, 125,000 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) beneficiaries, and 18,000 children in foster care. The decision to close the nearby New York City (Region 2) office will exacerbate the ill-effects of this decision.

It is impossible to overstate the lasting consequences this reckless action will have on every single person in this region—whether the families who rely on Region 1 employees dutifully overseeing child care licensing systems to ensure they deliver quality care to our children, or the coordination these civil servants conduct with state survey agencies to make sure all our nursing homes meet federal safety standards. Through steadfast commitment to the programs they oversee, employees of ROs provide a service to all of us whether we know it or not. The RO plays a key role in approving the state plans and cost allocation agreements that are necessary for our state to receive the family support and child welfare funding it is entitled to under federal law, and your action will likely delay that funding, directly harming vulnerable foster children and at-risk families. Your unilateral decision to deny the people of New England access to public health officials with expertise in our local communities and scientists working with local researchers to create the next cure will also have ramifications that will be felt in our children's worse health and social outcomes for decades.

Given its location in Boston, the Region 1 office has a history of expertise in biotechnology and drug development. Our region boasts some of the leading research and health institutions in the world, and the entire country has benefited from that innovative and life-saving work in part because the federal government has deployed Region 1 HHS experts from the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health to collaborate with these institutions. It is impossible to imagine why an Administration touting a "healthier" America would take a chainsaw to an entire operation focused on bringing cures to market faster.

The office also included staff with policy and technical assistance expertise from dozens of human services programs that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

administers, which provides services and supports to our nation's most vulnerable children and families. The ACF Office of Regional Operations plays an essential role in working with governors and state agencies to ensure these funds are administered efficiently, responsibly, and in the best interest of children. ACF regional staff are an irreplaceable piece of the state plan review and development process as mandated by statute in many human services programs. Staff also coordinate with tribal nations on culturally tailored technical assistance and oversee regional emergency responses for natural disasters—a role that will only be increasingly important in the face of climate change.

The gutting of our regional health and human services infrastructure on April 1, 2025, has the potential to send us back in time to a period where our health care providers and human services grantees were not held accountable for meeting federal standards for safe and effective care. It could open our region to massive risks of fraud and abuse of our vital federal programs. And it could provide the pathway for another pernicious disease to sweep the nation, absent vital on-the-ground detection and coordination among public health experts. We do not take lightly this attack on the health of our constituents and the unceremonious termination of thousands of experts living in our communities who make us all safer.

Therefore, we, the Massachusetts Delegation of the U.S. Congress, request a response, in writing, to the following no later than April 18, 2025:

1. Please provide a list of each division within the Boston RO that was eliminated, a description of its core functions, a summary of staff expertise, program staff caseloads for each overseen program at the time of closing, and all documentation justifying the Department's decision to close each division within the RO.
2. Please provide the Department's analysis of the impact this regional closure will have on costs and health outcomes for the 15 million residents of New England, as well as the local economy.
3. Please provide a detailed analysis of how the remaining five ROs will take over the responsibilities of the Boston RO, including total caseloads, in beneficiaries served and dollars managed, for the staff taking over New England responsibilities, and any anticipated hirings or training to offset the caseload inundation and loss of regional expertise.
4. Please provide a detailed analysis of anyways responsibilities of the Boston RO which will be absorbed by HHS headquarters, including the current and new responsibilities of any headquarters staff assuming responsibilities and any anticipated hirings to offset the caseload inundation and loss of regional expertise.
5. Please provide a detailed analysis of the anticipated additional wait times for services previously provided by staff at the Region 1 RO, such as the approval of Medicaid State Plan Amendments, enrollments of new providers into Medicare, surveys of nursing homes, child care licensing inspections, state plan approvals, and cost allocation agreements.

6. Please explain the Administration's plan for the now-vacant real estate that previously housed the Boston RO.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter.

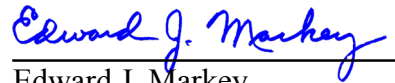
Sincerely,



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



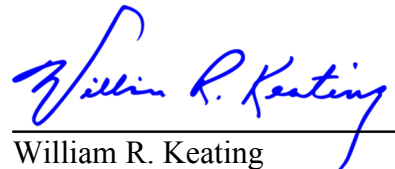
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



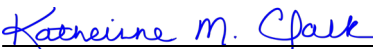
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



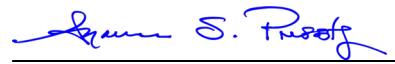
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss
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