

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

March 27, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We are writing to denounce and demand reversal of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) cancellation of previously awarded funding for public health and mental health services to New York State. We are greatly concerned by the reckless and rash cancellation of funds spearheaded by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which clearly failed to gauge the detrimental impact that these cuts will have on the entire country.

The funding that HHS plans to cancel, which includes over \$300 million in funding for the New York State Department of Health, Office of Addiction Supports and Services, and Office of Mental Health, is a lifeline for New Yorkers. Retracting this funding would mean weakening infectious disease preparedness, as well as mental health and substance use recovery services, provided by hundreds of entities across the state of New York, including county health departments and school systems. New Yorkers are greatly deserving of this federal support and we reiterate our demand for HHS to reinstate these funds.

This federal funding is being used to defend against infectious disease at a time when threats are growing, most imminently with the rapid rise of measles cases which have already exceeded the 2024 national case count. As of March 26<sup>th</sup>, there were three measles cases detected in New York State. Measles is a highly infectious disease that requires robust state and local public health coordination to ensure that cases and exposures are tracked appropriately. It is especially reckless to reduce infectious disease funding to New York during a time of concern over measles spread, especially considering New York City welcomes over 50 million Americans in tourism each year. Cutting funds to this extent is putting the health and well-being of all Americans at risk, especially children, seniors, and those with compromised immune systems. These cuts threaten one of the largest sources of funding for state and local health departments nationwide. Funding supports statewide laboratory capacity, community health workers, tribal nations, and 51 local health departments. Now is the time to invest further in the entities doing this important work, not to pull back on previously awarded funding.

These resources also provide tools to community members in the fight against the ongoing opioid epidemic. Municipalities of all sizes are working with the state to pursue evidence-based solutions to minimize the scourge of substance use disorder in New York. Grants are also used to support statewide response to the mental health crisis, and rescinding this funding puts meaningful progress in jeopardy.

Clawing back federal funding that was awarded before the grant end date puts the health of New Yorkers at risk, and jeopardizes hundreds of jobs at organizations and agencies. There is still a lack of information about what funding is at risk, what organizations and agencies will lose funding, and

what research and services will be ended as a result. Despite this uncertainty, it is clear that cutting funding will unnecessarily put the lives of New Yorkers at risk.

We demand that you reinstate this important funding immediately. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator