

# Health Response Alliance Raises Concerns Over HHS Plan to Shift ASPR Under CDC

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Health Response Alliance released a critical analysis of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' proposed restructuring that would place the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), warning that the consolidation could weaken the nation's emergency response capacity.

ASPR was elevated to an operating division within HHS in 2022 to reflect its growing scope and importance. It plays a central role in federal preparedness and response for public health emergencies, from pandemics to natural disasters to bioterrorism. ASPR oversees the Strategic National Stockpile, supports the National Disaster Medical System, and works through the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) to develop and secure medical countermeasures.

The CDC, while a cornerstone of public health surveillance, research, and disease prevention, is structured around long-term public health goals. Emergency operations require different tools: rapid logistics, interagency coordination, on-the-ground surge support, and dynamic decision-making under time constraints. These operational demands do not always align with the governance and consensus-based processes that characterize large public health agencies.

The restructuring also includes a broader reduction of approximately 10,000 full-time positions across HHS. Without transparency on where these reductions will occur, there is justified concern that cuts could weaken surge response systems and readiness infrastructure.

## HRA's Concerns

Health Response Alliance calls for any transition to preserve the following safeguards:

**Dedicated preparedness funding** insulated from shifting agency priorities.

**Clear operational command structures** during declared emergencies.

**Independence and flexibility** for essential programs including the Strategic National Stockpile, BARDA, and the National Disaster Medical System.

**Continued collaboration** with state and local health departments, as well as private sector and NGO partners who rely on ASPR's convening authority.

*“Improved coordination within HHS is a worthwhile goal. But consolidation should not be mistaken for effectiveness. The test of this restructuring will not be how streamlined it looks on paper, but how it performs during the next crisis.”*

**Tom Cotter, CEO, Health Response Alliance**

HRA urges HHS to release a detailed implementation plan with clearly defined roles, robust resource commitments, and mechanisms for accountability before any transition moves forward.

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#### **ABOUT HEALTH RESPONSE ALLIANCE**

Health Response Alliance is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to improving disaster health response through strong partnerships and innovative solutions. EIN: 33-2575005

#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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