

Statement from Disability and Aging Collaborative
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2025

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The Disability and Aging Collaborative

Disability and Aging Collaborative Reacts to Harmful Announcement from HHS

WASHINGTON D.C. – In response to the HHS Announcement today splitting up the Administration for Community Living, which is part of the continued assault on programs that support aging adults, disabled people and both paid and unpaid caregivers:

The co-chairs of the Disability and Aging Collaborative shares the following statement about the announcement today 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 Disability and Aging Collaborative (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 today from HHS that they will split the important work of the Administration for Community Living (ACL) across several other agencies, cutting staff and diluting programs.

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, enabling people to live independently in their communities. By managing and distributing federal funding for services such as home care, nutrition assistance, and caregiver support, the 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 disruptive change threatens to increase rates of institutionalization, homelessness, and long-lasting economic hardships.

This drastic measure also disregards the purpose of ACL, which was created in 2012 to create efficiencies and prevent duplication of efforts between aging and disability

networks - now, a function at significant risk. ACL serves as a hub across HHS and with other Departments to coordinate services and supports critical to disabled people and older adults, such as Long-term Services and Supports 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.

Today's announcement offers no guarantees that these essential functions will continue. This development comes amidst other alarming threats, including proposed cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and Social Security, and the dissolution of the Department of Education.

This announcement represents a continued affront on the programs that support the constituencies that DAC represents, and cannot move forward."