



June 25, 2025

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 today about the importance of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and specifically the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) in the lives of Americans, including the older adults our members serve. We are urging you to reconsider your decision to disband the HICPAC and to move swiftly to appoint new committee members as you have recently done with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

The Fiscal 2026 President's Budget emphasizes the importance of focusing CDC on its core mission of supporting infectious disease surveillance, outbreak investigations, preparedness and response, and maintaining the nation's public health infrastructure. LeadingAge urges the Secretary to consider how HICPAC contributed to this core mission.

CDC's recommendations and guidelines for infection control were previously developed by HICPAC, not the CDC itself, through a transparent process open to public observation and participation. HICPAC was divided into workgroups that were assigned the task of reviewing research and data on a given topic and drafting recommendations for best practices. These recommendations were then shared with the broader Committee and discussed during a public meeting. There, both Committee members and public stakeholders had the option to provide feedback, ask questions, and press for clarification or changes. Importantly, also at these public meetings, the Committee could vote on draft recommendations once all outstanding issues had been resolved.

Following HICPAC's approval of draft recommendations, they were submitted to CDC for review, with the opportunity for CDC to ask questions or request clarification. After these issues were addressed and recommendations were approved by CDC, they were submitted to the Federal Register, where the public had the opportunity to comment and raise concerns during a public comment period. After any necessary adjustments based on public comment, the draft recommendations could be finalized by CDC, becoming guidelines that were accurately described by Project 2025 as "analogous to guidelines from other public health associations or medical societies." These guidelines were then available to federal agencies such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and to state and local public health entities to adopt or implement in preparation for or response to infectious diseases and threats.

While the COVID-19 public health emergency provided a recent high-profile example of CDC recommendations being adopted by CMS and states at their discretion as requirements, other less controversial examples include the broad adoption by states of CDC's recommendations for tuberculosis screening of healthcare personnel and nation-wide adoption of contact precautions in healthcare

settings to prevent transmission of germs when caring for individuals with clostridium difficile infection, or c. diff.

Considerable expertise is lost by eliminating HICPAC. Individuals appointed to HICPAC were subject matter experts in the fields of infectious disease, infection prevention, healthcare epidemiology, nursing, clinical and environmental microbiology, surgery, internal medicine, occupational health, and public health who were nominated and selected through a public process. America – including nearly 60 million older adults over the age of 65, many of whom are served by our nonprofit and mission-driven members in nursing homes, home health, hospice, and other care settings – needs this Committee of experts to formulate the science-backed recommendations on which healthcare professionals rely to guide them in caring for and protecting the patients in their care and the hardworking healthcare personnel who serve them.

We urge you to take immediate action to appoint new members to HICPAC and allow this Committee to resume the essential work of reviewing and updating infection control recommendations. Do not leave our nation unprotected against the inevitability of emerging and infectious diseases that can threaten our well-being and national security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Smith Sloan  
President and CEO

**About LeadingAge:** LeadingAge represents more than 5,400 nonprofit and mission-driven aging services providers and other organizations that touch millions of lives every day. Alongside our members and 36 partners in 41 states, we use advocacy, education, applied research, and community-building to make America a better place to grow old. Our membership encompasses the entire continuum of aging services, including skilled nursing, assisted living, memory care, affordable housing, retirement communities, adult day programs, community-based services, hospice, home-based care, and other organizations serving older adults, people with disabilities, and their families.