



July 5, 2018

**VIA E-MAIL**

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

In your five months as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and your previous time at the Department in other roles, I am confident that you are familiar with the dedication and commitment of the HHS workforce.

As the leader of an organization that represents about 14,000 of your fellow HHS colleagues, I am deeply knowledgeable about the contributions of these employees as well. The National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) has represented frontline employees at HHS for many years, including those at HHS Headquarters, the Food and Drug Administration, the Administration for Children and Families, the Administration on Community Living, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the National Center for Health Statistics and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The men and women in these agencies, many of them spread all over the country delivering vital HHS services in every community, chose a life of public service because they believe in the mission of HHS. This is why it is disheartening to see your agency's recent proposals to dramatically diminish their voices at the agency and to alter their collective bargaining agreement by stripping it of critical workplace policies, harming employees, the Department, and the public in the process.

Presumably with your knowledge and support, HHS has proposed eliminating entire articles of the contract such as alternative work schedules, telework, performance awards and transit subsidies. Your bargaining team is proposing changes that would weaken due process, make it easier to terminate employees, and bar employees from formally challenging violations of what rights they would have left.

NTEU has approached negotiations with the goal of retaining and enhancing these workplace practices, allowing HHS to keep its current employees and compete for the best and brightest. It is alarming that while NTEU is focused on improving HHS workplaces, management is intent on rolling back employee representation and eliminating incentives that are now common in the private sector.



The Honorable Alex M. Azar II  
July 5, 2018  
Page Two

Labor-management relations at HHS can — and should — return to a more respectful and professional endeavor. To that end, I request that we meet as soon as possible so we can together put HHS and NTEU back on the path of creating a workplace that benefits the agency, the employees and the taxpayers we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony M. Reardon  
National President