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**Nine Organizations Dedicated to Public Health File Suit to Stop Federal Government's  
Deletion of Vital Medical Data and Resources**

*Online Disappearance of Taxpayer-Funded Resources Has Harmed Public Health Efforts at All  
Levels of Medical Practice*

SEATTLE -- Today, a group of nine medical organizations and public health nonprofits sued the federal government to stop the deletion of vital public health and science data. Since January, the Department of Health and Human Services and its constituent agencies have deleted numerous websites that medical providers, scientists and public health professionals rely on to address issues ranging from pregnancy risks to opioid-use disorder to the AIDS epidemic.

The lawsuit, filed today in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, would enforce federal law and require the agencies to restore deleted websites and stop any further removal of public health data. The suit highlights the government's "arbitrary, capricious and unreasoned" decisions to delete these critical resources, which federal law requires be made available to the American people.

*Washington State Medical Association et al. v. Kennedy et al.* highlights the significant impact of the deleted information: preventing doctors and nurses from providing critical information to their patients; stopping nonprofit health organizations from utilizing data to inform cutting-edge research; and impeding efforts by local governments to track the spread of disease and address behavioral health crises.

The lawsuit's nine plaintiffs are: Washington State Medical Association, Washington State Nurses Association, Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, AcademyHealth, Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, Fast-Track Cities Institute, International Association of Providers of AIDS Care, National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network and Vermont Medical Society.

The Defendants include Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and the leaders of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, and Office of Personnel Management.

**“These executive-ordered website deletions were driven by ideology, not by science or evidence. In an instant, trusted health information vanished—resources that physicians, other clinicians, and clinics relied on to manage patients’ health conditions and overall care,”** John Bramhall, MD, PhD, president of the Washington State Medical Association, which represents nearly 13,000 physicians, resident physicians, physician assistants, and medical students in Washington state. **“This is more than a policy shift; it is a direct attack on science, evidence-based medicine, and our profession’s ability to care for our patients. As the leading voice for physicians in Washington state, we must stop this direct interference into our ability to provide the best care for our patients.”**

**“Nurses strive to provide evidence-based care. That means care that is driven by current data—but we can’t do that if the data is unavailable,”** said Justin Gill, DNP, APRN, RN, President of the Washington State Nurses Association. **“The Administration’s actions in deleting and scrubbing information from federal health agency websites not only harms our members—it endangers our patients, their families, and communities. We need access to current data to provide our patients with the care they need and the knowledge they need to make informed healthcare decisions. Patient care and the public’s health must take priority.”**

**“WCAAP is joining this lawsuit so that pediatricians regain access to the evidence and databases we need in order to care for children and their families,”** said Dr. Beth Ebel, President of the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. **“Our members have been startled to discover that critical travel advice to protect children and adolescents from infections have been removed, including guidance on highly effective medications and vaccinations. Early alert data identifying new injury and poison risks have been impacted. Long-time data that guide the health of kids in school and emergence of new risks such as Zyn pods filled with flavored nicotine are impacted. Families rely upon pediatricians to provide the best advice for their children, and pediatricians need access to critical data to guide their care and do our jobs.”**

**“We can’t afford to stand on the sidelines while the foundation of evidence-based research—open, public data—is quietly dismantled,”** said Dr. Aaron Carroll, president and CEO of AcademyHealth. **“Access to trustworthy information is what allows us to solve real problems, improve health outcomes, and plan for the future. If we don’t stand up for data now, we risk losing the tools we all rely on to make progress—regardless of politics.”**

**“The politically motivated removal or editing of evidence-based public health information and clinical guidelines presents a serious risk to all Americans,”** said Carole Treston, RN, MPH, FAAN, Executive Director of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC). **“ANAC**

**has joined this lawsuit because our members and other nurses rely on the updated information regarding HIV prevention and treatment, produced through U.S. taxpayer funded clinical trials and expertise. For example, the entire section of the Guidelines for Treatment of Adults and Adolescents with HIV unique to transgender individuals has been removed. Since 1998, these periodically updated guidelines, published by HHS, have reflected advances in HIV science & treatment and are the main resource for clinicians and health professions students, including nurses. Now, without complete information, there is not only a knowledge gap, but also a real threat to the health and welfare of people living with HIV.”**

**“The alteration, deletion, or omission of disaggregated HIV and other health data from federal websites is a political decision with dangerous public health consequences for people living with and affected by HIV in the United States,”** said Dr. José M. Zuniga, President/CEO of the Fast-Track Cities Institute, which delivers technical assistance to a global network of 550+ Fast-Track Cities, including 50 cities and counties in the United States. **“Cities and counties cannot end their urban HIV epidemics with a blindfold on. FTCI is taking a stand to ensure that facts are not sacrificed for ideology and that communities – especially the most marginalized – are visible, valued, and served.”**

**“The actions taken to erase federal information on LGBTQ+ health and HIV prevention are not only unjust – they are antithetical to human rights, medicine, and public health,”** said Dr. Chris Duncombe, International Association of Providers of AIDS Care’s (IAPAC) Vice President/CMO. **“IAPAC is proud to stand with other likeminded institutions in demanding accountability from the U.S. Government and ensuring that unfettered, uncensored access to evidence-based public health information is not treated as either optional or expendable.”**

**“LGBTQI+ health is public health, and the reckless erasure of this life-saving data has profound implications for all of our communities,”** said Dr. Scout, executive director of National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network. **“The amount of research, investment, and time put into those websites cannot be measured, and wiping them endangers all Americans, especially those of us who come from marginalized spaces. The Network is proud to support this call for full restoration of these public health resources.”**

**“The members of the Vermont Medical Society are proud to join this extremely important case. We have heard from our members that the loss of federal data and disclaimers added to certain websites have already led to more families delaying or declining vaccines, patients opting out of demographic questions, and barriers to providing appropriate patient care and information,”** according to Katie Marvin, MD, President of the Vermont

Medical Society, the largest professional association representing physicians in Vermont.

**“Vermont clinicians are dedicated to providing honest, accurate, science-based information to help patients and communities make informed decisions about their health, and joining this litigation to restore federal sources of information is one critical step in that direction.”**

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