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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Sues HHS, Secretary Kennedy to Overturn Public Health Grant Cuts

BALTIMORE, MD (April 1, 2025) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today joined a coalition of 22 attorneys general and two governors in filing a [lawsuit](#) against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. for abruptly and illegally terminating nearly \$11 billion in critical public health grants to the states.

The grant terminations, which came with no warning or legally valid explanation, have quickly caused chaos for state health agencies that continue to rely on these critical funds for a wide range of urgent public health needs such as infectious disease management, fortifying emergency preparedness, providing mental health and substance abuse services, and modernizing public health infrastructure.

Maryland stands to lose approximately \$200 million from these cancellations by HHS. If the funding is not restored, important state public health programs and initiatives will have to be dissolved or disbanded, including vital funding to support vaccination programs, track disease outbreaks, and alleviate health disparities.

The HHS cuts threaten the urgent public health needs of states around the country at a time when emerging disease threats—such as measles and bird flu—are on the rise, Attorney General Brown and the coalition warned.

“The Trump Administration’s reckless and unlawful termination of \$11 billion in critical public health grants is a dangerous assault on our State’s ability to protect our residents when infectious diseases like the measles or bird flu are on the rise,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “I am outraged that the President would cut this lifeline with zero warning, threatening to dismantle vital health services our communities depend on. I will fight with every legal tool available to reverse this indefensible decision before it costs Marylanders their lives.”

Congress authorized and appropriated new and increased funding for these grants in COVID-19-related legislation to support critical public health needs. Many of these grants are from specific programs created by Congress, such as block grants to states for mental health and substance abuse and addiction services. Yet, with no legal authority or explanation, on March 24, Secretary Kennedy’s HHS agencies arbitrarily terminated these grants “for cause” effective immediately, claiming that the pandemic is over and the grants are no longer necessary.

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In its lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Rhode Island, the coalition asserts that the mass terminations violate federal law because the end of the pandemic is not a “for cause” basis for ending the grants, especially since none of the appropriated funds are tied to the end of the pandemic which occurred more than a year ago. HHS’ position, up until a few days ago, was that the end of the pandemic did not affect the availability of these grant funds. Moreover, for some of the grants, termination “for cause” is not a permissible basis for termination, yet the federal government unlawfully terminated them.

With this lawsuit, Attorney General Brown and the coalition are seeking a temporary restraining order to block Secretary Kennedy’s and HHS’ mass grant terminations in the suing states, arguing that the actions violate the Administrative Procedure Act. The states are also asking the court to prevent HHS from maintaining or reinstating the terminations and any agency actions implementing them.

Joining Attorney General Brown in filing the lawsuit, co-led by Colorado, California, Minnesota, Rhode Island, and Washington, are the attorneys general of Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawai’i, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Wisconsin, and the Governors of Kentucky and Pennsylvania..

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