DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES Office of the Secretary
Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20201

Case No. 2025-00024-A-OS/2025-00516-FOIA-OS

December 16, 2024

David Medeiros
MuckRock News, DEPT MR176068
263 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA 02115
Sent via email: 176068-56161538@requests.muckrock.com

Dear Mr. Medeiros:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) appeal, submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), FOI/Privacy Acts Division. We received your appeal on **November 12, 2024**. Your appeal challenges the Office of the Secretary (OS) response to your client's original FOIA request (Request No. 2025-00516-FOIA-OS). **We assigned your appeal the tracking number above based on when it was received in this office.** Please reference this number on your correspondence.

Your appeal challenges OS's denial of expedited processing with ADA-mandated accommodations for accessible communication.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(B)(i) and 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(B)(iii) of the FOIA and 45 CFR 5.24(f) of the HHS FOIA regulations, your appeal falls under "unusual circumstances" in that our office will need to consult with another office or agency that has substantial interest in the determination of the appeal. The actual processing time will depend on the complexity of the issues presented in the appeal and consultation with other HHS components involved. Each appeal is handled on a first-in, first-out basis in relation to the other open appeals in the processing queue. Currently, there are approximately 550 open appeals in the processing queue. For more information about how your appeal will be processed please refer to the HHS FOIA regulations (https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/10/28/2016-25684/freedom-of-information-regulations).

As a final note, if you are not already submitting your appeals through our Public Access Link (PAL), we recommend all future appeals be submitted through PAL - https://requests.publiclink.hhs.gov/. Submitting appeals through PAL automatically logs your appeal into our tracking system and provides you with a tracking number. Your PAL account will allow you to track the progress of your appeal, receive your response directly through the portal, and securely submit privacy-sensitive or business-sensitive documents. If you have any questions, please email us at FOIArequest@hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

Alesia Y. Williams
Director, FOIA Appeals and Litigation
FOI/Privacy Acts Division