

ASPR Team:

As you know firsthand, ASPR is at the forefront of many of HHS's and the Biden-Harris Administration's top priorities. Whether your work involves strengthening our core preparedness and response capabilities, tackling new and emerging challenges, or providing essential support services to the team, please know that the work that you do matters and that it is making a big difference.

In recognition of the tremendous value this team brings to the Department and the American people – and due to the increasing size and scope of what we do – I asked Secretary Becerra to consider making us an Operating Division and I am pleased to report that **Secretary Becerra has made the critically important decision to elevate our team from a Staff Division to an Operating Division (OpDiv)!**

This change allows ASPR to mobilize a coordinated national response more quickly and stably during future disasters and emergencies while equipping us with greater hiring and contracting capabilities. As an OpDiv, we are now in the same category as other large HHS teams with core operational responsibilities such as CDC, NIH, FDA, CMS, and ACF. This change is an important next step for our organization which has continued to grow and evolve since its creation in 2006 – the pace of which has quickened over the past year. This change is also a recognition of the good work you all have been and continue to do on behalf of the American people.

ASPR has always had key operational responsibilities including the missions of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), and Medical Reserve Corps. In recent years, however, particularly during the multi-year COVID-19 pandemic response, ASPR's operational functions have grown significantly to include the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) in 2018, public health supply chain in 2020, and the establishment of the HHS Coordination Operations and Response Element (H-CORE) at the beginning of 2022. Each of these mission expansions added significant operational responsibility to ASPR pushing it against the limits of a typical Staff Division that traditionally provides functional (i.e. financial, communication, policy and legislative) support to the Secretary and the Department.

Along with this reclassification, moving forward we will be known as the **Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR)**. The adjustment to our name signals our elevation to an OpDiv, while maintaining the equity and brand recognition we have built with key internal and external stakeholders, particularly over the course of the pandemic.

These changes are complementary to the broader ASPR reorganization, which we will begin implementing in the second half of the year. I wanted to secure the OpDiv status change first so that we can incorporate it into our next generation organizational structure. While the name change is immediate, enhanced capability in hiring and contracting will be made over a period of time to ensure a seamless and gradual transition of key responsibilities from the Assistant Secretary for Administration to our ASPR team.

We will have more to share about the elevation to OpDiv in the coming days and weeks, but I wanted to make sure to tell our team first before sharing with other stakeholders.

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