

**Exhibit 104**



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20201

**Case No. 2023-00117-A-PHS**

**June 9, 2023**

Sorenson Law Office  
PO Box 10836  
Eugene, Oregon 97440

Dear Mr. C. Peter Sorenson,

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 June 8, 2023. Your appeal challenges the National Institutes of Health's (NIH's) response to your original FOIA request (Request No. 60127). Your appeal has been assigned the above-stated case number based on when it was received in this office. Please reference this number on your correspondence.

Your appeal challenges the NIH's adequacy of the search, the agency's failure to issue a final determination by the statutory deadline, and the denial of the fee waiver.

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 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (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 470 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@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:foiarequest@psc.hhs.gov).

Sincerely yours,

*Alesia Y. Williams*

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

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