



Office of the Chief  
Records Officer for the  
U.S. Government

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

December 16, 2020

Mr. Scott W. Rowell  
Assistant Secretary for Administration  
Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Hubert Humphrey Building, Suite 309-F  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Rowell:

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) recently received allegations concerning the unauthorized disposition of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) email records. In a December 10, 2020, letter from the Chairman of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Director of the CDC (attached), Chairman James Clyburn stated:

I write today to express my serious concern about what may be deliberate efforts by the Trump Administration to conceal and destroy evidence that senior political appointees interfered with career officials' response to the coronavirus crisis at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This week, a career CDC official stated in a transcribed interview with Select Subcommittee staff that she was instructed to delete an email in which a Department of Health and Human Services appointee demanded that CDC alter or rescind truthful scientific reports he believed were damaging to President Trump. She also stated that she understood the instructions to delete the email came from CDC Director Robert Redfield.

Please note that, per 36 CFR 1230.14, if records have been destroyed without NARA's proper authorization, CDC must cease destruction and report the incidents promptly to NARA.

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16(b), NARA is requesting that CDC investigate this allegation and provide a response, within 30 calendar days, as described in 36 CFR 1230.14. If email or other records were deleted, please indicate if the specific records outlined in the allegation can be recovered or duplicated from other sources. If you have any questions, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

Enclosure

cc:

Karen Ballesteros, HHS, Agency Records Officer  
Mary K. Wilson, CDC, Agency Records Officer



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***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

January 28, 2021

Mr. Scott W. Rowell  
Assistant Secretary for Administration  
Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Hubert Humphrey Building, Suite 309-F  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Rowell,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received your report dated January 11, 2021, in response to an allegation concerning the unauthorized disposition of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) email records. This case was based on information cited in correspondence from the Chairman of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Director of the CDC.

Your report states that, "the mailboxes for the two staff members of the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA) are retained as follows:

- Michael Caputo, Former Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, HHS Capstone Official. Mr. Caputo's email records are held on permanent retention.
- Paul Alexander, Senior Policy Advisor to the ASP A, non-Capstone Official. Mr. Alexander's email records are held for seven years after the date of creation.

Email from both employee mailboxes are discoverable by means of eDiscovery through the Microsoft 365 Compliance Center until either the retention period expires or records are accessioned to the National Archives for permanent preservation."

Additionally, CDC conducted a forensic review and confirmed that emails of Dr. Charlotte Kent's account, and other related emails have been located on the CDC email system.

Based on the information provided in your report, NARA considers this allegation of unauthorized disposition of agency records unfounded. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

cc:

Karen Ballesteros, HHS, Agency Records Officer  
Mary K. Wilson, CDC, Agency Records Officer