

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We write with serious concern and vehement opposition to your stated intent to promote “deprescribing” of psychiatric medications to reduce what you have mischaracterized as an overuse of antidepressants.

While we support efforts to ensure that psychiatric medication is prescribed appropriately and make sure that patients understand their treatment plan, we are deeply troubled by the inaccurate and misleading framing of this campaign. Psychiatric medications like antidepressants and other evidence-based treatments are, for many Americans, not “optional interventions.”

These treatments are essential, life-sustaining care. Psychiatric medications, like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), including Prozac, Zoloft, and Lexapro, are some of the leading treatments for depression and anxiety and are approved for psychological treatment by leading medical organizations.

Mental health guidelines coming from our nation’s primary health authority must be supported by evidence-based science, focus on patient-centered care, and support access to the full continuum of treatment options. Efforts that stigmatize or limit access to clinically appropriate medications must be rooted in science and follow trusted public safety guidelines.

On May 4, 2026, as part of the “Make America Healthy Again” agenda, you announced that the Department of Health and Human Services is pursuing a campaign to “curb” the prescribing of psychiatric medications and encourage tapering, while also promoting non-pharmacological alternatives, which you incorrectly claim to be “alternative” medicine.

This follows your false and heinous comments last year about psychiatric medications. You made the claim that “every Black kid is now just standard put on Adderall, SSRIs, benzos, which are known to create violence.” During your confirmation hearings, you also repeatedly claimed

that SSRIs are harder to quit than heroin. These are unequivocally false and destructive claims, and they undermine trust in our nation's public health institutions.

Cutting Americans off from their medications will create confusion among patients, increase stigma around mental health, and disrupt treatment that is critical for those with mental and behavioral health issues. Encouraging Americans to "deprescribe" risks patients abruptly stopping their medication, which can cause relapse, withdrawal complications, or increased suicide risk.

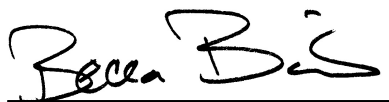
The Health and Human Services Department should focus on the systemic drivers of our nation's mental health crisis, which are persistent barriers to care, workforce shortages, and unaffordable access to comprehensive treatment. Any policy that fails to address these systemic gaps while emphasizing medication reduction harms patients and exacerbates the mental health crisis in America.

Given these concerns, we request that your office provide detailed answers to the following:

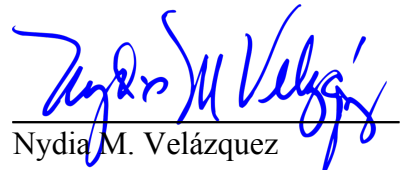
1. What specific steps is the administration taking to ensure uninterrupted access to psychiatric medications for patients who rely on them, including safeguards against shortages, insurance restrictions, or inappropriate pressure to discontinue treatment?
2. How will the administration ensure that decisions about prescribing or deprescribing remain a choice between patients and their qualified clinicians, free from political or ideological influence?
3. What protocols are in place to prevent adverse outcomes that are associated with medication tapering or discontinuation?
4. How is the administration ensuring that any policy changes do not disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, including low-income patients, rural communities, and individuals with severe mental illness?
5. Will the administration commit to regular, transparent reporting to Congress and the public regarding the implementation, outcomes, and impacts of these policies?

We urge the administration to clarify its approach and work with clinicians, patients, and Congress to ensure that all Americans have access to the mental health care that they need.

Sincerely,



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



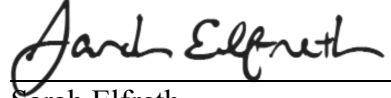
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



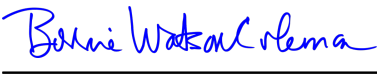
Andrea Salinas
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Bonnie Watson Coleman
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