



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on April 5, 2022

Report: CDC Plans to “Revamp” Itself Amid Credibility Crisis

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the nation’s top federal agency responsible for producing sound health advice yet mired in incompetence and corruption, announced Monday it plans to undergo a month-long “revamp” as it faces a credibility crisis for its handling of Covid pandemic.

According to a *Washington Post* [report](#),

In an agencywide email ... [CDC Director Rochelle] Walensky said she has hired a senior federal health official outside of the Atlanta-based agency to conduct a one-month review to ‘kick off an evaluation of CDC’s structure, systems, and processes.’



“Over the past year, I have heard from many of you that you would like to see CDC build on its rich history and modernize for the world around us,” Walensky wrote to the staff.

Walensky said that the lessons she has learned from the Covid pandemic, along with the feedback she received inside and outside the agency, “indicate that it is time to take a step back and strategically position CDC to support the future of public health.”

The focus on the agency’s “revamping” will be its “core capabilities,” such as expanding its workforce, data modernization, laboratory capacity, health equity, rapid response to disease outbreaks, and preparedness within the United States and around the world, per the report.

As a result, Walensky expects her agency to “develop new systems and processes to deliver our science and program to the American people, along with a plan for how CDC should be structured to facilitate the public health work we do.”

Seemingly responding to a drastic [decline](#) in public trust in the agency, Walensky noted in a separate statement that “Never in its 75-year history has CDC had to make decisions so quickly, based on often limited, real-time, and evolving science.”

She added, “As we’ve challenged our state and local partners, we know that now is the time for CDC to integrate the lessons learned into a strategy for the future.”

According to the director, the effort to “revamp” the CDC is set to begin April 11. The agency decided not to invite any outsiders, and the evaluation of the agency’s work and reorganizing its structure will be conducted by Jim Macrae, who serves as an associate administrator for primary healthcare at the Health Resources and Services Administration, or HRSA. Both HRSA and the CDC are sister agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).



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While the American public, the federal government, and businesses have relied on messaging from the CDC on safety measures during the pandemic, the agency has been struggling to produce reliable advice.

The New York Times [posted](#) on the matter that the key issue was the CDC's "neglected infrastructure" that could not handle the "unprecedented challenges" of the pandemic.

That led to "key mistakes in testing and surveillance" at the onset of the pandemic, "for example, famously fumbling design of a diagnostic kit sent to state laboratories."

The outlet went on to remind the public that the agency did not recommend wearing masks fast enough "because agency scientists didn't recognize quickly that the virus was airborne."

Overall, the agency's advice on masking was quite confusing and unproductive. The agency recommended masks for children as young as two, despite the medical fact that this age group is the least at-risk from Covid. At the same time, the agency went from saying that healthy people who do not work in the healthcare sector and are not taking care of an infected person at home [do not need](#) to wear masks to recommending people wear N95 respirators.

Then, reminds *The Times*, the CDC prematurely declared in May 2021 that fully vaccinated people can ditch masks only to reverse the guidance next month when finding out the fully vaccinated can get sick with Covid and spread it to others.

Early this year, the CDC said that most Americans could forgo masks in most indoor public settings while leaving the [recommendation](#) for schoolchildren to wear masks unchanged. Such seemingly illogical guidance infuriated many parents. However, it was supported by the influential teachers' unions, such as the National Education Association, which [have](#) pressed the agency to keep children masked.

The agency evidently took cues from the unions on other Covid measures related to schools. For example, when drafting its school reopening guidance, the agency [incorporated](#) edits proposed by the American Federation of Teachers.

More recently, the agency came under fire for quietly slashing its reported Covid-associated death tallies by hundreds of thousands, citing an "accidental" coding error. The incorrect metrics have been used to justify authorization of additional vaccine doses and vaccines for children from the age of five to 11, and were quoted by Walensky herself.

As [reported](#) by *The New American*, the CDC appears to have actually contributed to botching the Covid statistics. For example, the agency gave hospitals wide discretion in attributing deaths to Covid, as well as giving those hospitals received generous incentives to do so.

Earlier in February, the CDC was [caught](#) intentionally misreporting the data related to Covid hospitalizations and breakthrough infections because the agency did not wish the data to be "misinterpreted." More troubling, however, was that the CDC acknowledged that it is "a political organization as much as it is a public health organization."

"The steps that it takes to get something like this released are often well outside of the control of many of the scientists that work at the C.D.C.," said Samuel Scarpino, managing director of pathogen surveillance at the Rockefeller Foundation's Pandemic Prevention Institute.

There is another issue that affects the federal agency's decision-making: corruption and regulatory capture. According to a STAT News [report](#) from 2019, since it was created in 1995, the agency has



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accepted \$161 million from Big Pharma companies such as Pfizer, Biogen, and Merck.

In other words, no matter how hard Walensky tries to “revamp” and “modernize” the CDC, the attempts will likely bear little fruit as long as political bias and corporate interests continue driving the agency’s decision-making.



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