

# Top NIH Officials Out, Including Fauci's Wife, as RFK Jr. Cleans House



In a sweeping shake-up aimed at restoring public trust in America's health institutions, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has ousted several high-ranking officials tied to the controversial COVID-19 vaccine response—including none other than Anthony Fauci's wife, Christine Grady.

Grady, who led the bioethics department at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) during one of the most ethically fraught chapters in modern medical history, was quietly removed from her position this week, along with other Fauci-era loyalists who helped steer the nation's pandemic policies. Their departures mark the clearest sign yet that Kennedy intends to hold Washington's public health elite accountable for decisions that have left a lasting scar on science, medicine, and the American public.

According to reports, Grady and several other top officials

were either reassigned, offered remote posts far from Washington, or terminated outright. Among them were Jeanne Marrazzo, Fauci's hand-picked successor as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID); Clifford Lane, a 45-year NIH veteran and NIAID's deputy director for clinical research; and Emily Erbelding, head of the Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases.

Although framed as a routine restructuring effort, the moves are anything but. Taken together, they represent a direct repudiation of the policies and leadership that dominated the federal government's pandemic response under Fauci's decades-long reign at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Sources close to the matter say the shake-up has been months in the making and is part of a broader effort by Kennedy to reorient the federal health establishment around transparency, accountability, and scientific integrity—values critics say were abandoned during the COVID-19 crisis.

“This is about cleaning house,” said one HHS official who spoke on condition of anonymity. “We’re not going to get meaningful reform until the people who allowed this to happen are out.”

Under Grady's leadership, the NIH's bioethics division came under intense scrutiny for its failure to investigate or even publicly address key ethical concerns surrounding the U.S. government's funding of gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology—research that many experts now believe may have played a role in the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grady's removal is especially significant in light of ongoing investigations into the NIH's oversight failures and the lack of transparency around royalty payments received by agency scientists. Fauci himself has come under fire for declining to disclose key financial ties during his tenure, despite being

the highest-paid federal employee.

In many ways, Grady's role at the NIH symbolized the revolving door between ethics oversight and the institutions being regulated. Critics long argued that her position created the illusion of bioethical scrutiny without actual accountability.

"She never investigated the ethics of funding dangerous research in China. She never held her husband's agency accountable. Her job was to provide cover, not oversight," said David Gortler, a former senior FDA advisor and whistleblower.

Despite public pressure, Grady never recused herself from overseeing ethics guidelines for research conducted or approved by her husband's agency. This conflict of interest became emblematic of the broader credibility crisis facing the NIH and other public health agencies during the pandemic.

## **Bureaucratic Shell Game**

For years, Anthony Fauci was heralded as the face of science and reason, but as more information has emerged about his role in shaping public health messaging, suppressing dissent, and funding high-risk research abroad, his legacy has unraveled.

Kennedy, who was appointed HHS secretary earlier this year after a historic independent run for the presidency, has made no secret of his plans to overhaul the institutions that, in his view, contributed to widespread public harm under the guise of pandemic management.

The latest round of dismissals, while shocking to some, is consistent with Kennedy's promise to root out corruption and restore public trust.

"These are the people who pushed a one-size-fits-all vaccine agenda, ignored natural immunity, silenced dissenting scientists and stood by while pharmaceutical companies reaped

billions in profits with no liability,” said a senior adviser to Kennedy. “They had their chance, and they failed the American people.”

While some officials, like Marrazzo, were reportedly offered positions at satellite offices outside of D.C., others were simply let go. A source familiar with internal NIH discussions said the reassignments were designed in part to sideline the old guard without triggering political backlash or lengthy legal disputes over civil service protections.

“It’s a bureaucratic shell game,” said the source. “You move them out of the power center and make room for reform-minded leadership.”

The NIH has not publicly confirmed the changes, and a spokesperson declined to comment on personnel matters. However, the political and scientific implications are clear: the Kennedy administration is cutting ties with the architects of a response that left millions of Americans skeptical of public health guidance, distrustful of the medical system, and in some cases, harmed by policies that prioritized pharmaceutical profits over patient safety.

## **A New Direction**

Reforming agencies as large and entrenched as the NIH and U.S. Food and Drug Administration will require more than a few personnel changes. It will take cultural change, legal reform, and a sustained effort to hold leadership accountable to the public they serve.

Kennedy has already begun installing new leadership committed to restoring scientific integrity and public transparency. Insiders say his appointments will prioritize individuals with no financial conflicts of interest, no ties to pharmaceutical lobbying, and a strong track record of ethical advocacy.

But this first wave of firings and reassignments sends a powerful message: the era of impunity for America's public health elites is over. Whether these changes will be enough to win back public trust remains to be seen. But for many Americans who felt gaslit, coerced, and ignored during the pandemic, Kennedy's actions signal a long-overdue course correction.

The next challenge will be ensuring that new leadership does not fall into the same traps: secrecy, political bias, and allegiance to industry over people. The true test of reform will not be who is removed, but what replaces the system that allowed this dysfunction to take root in the first place.