# POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and human services**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Finance jointly with Health, Education, Labor and Pensions |
| Agency Mission | To enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans by providing effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health and social services. |
| Position Overview | The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislation serves as the primary link between HHS and Congress. The office is responsible for the development and implementation of the department's legislative agenda, and also informs Congress of the department's views, priorities, actions, grants and contracts. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Health and Human Services  |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2015, HHS had $1,028 billion in outlays and 63,324 total employment. The Assistant Secretary oversees all six divisions in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislation ([Immediate Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislation](http://www.hhs.gov/asl/divisions/divisions.html#io); [Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Discretionary Health Programs](http://www.hhs.gov/asl/divisions/divisions.html#dasbh); [Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Mandatory Health Programs](http://www.hhs.gov/asl/divisions/divisions.html#dashep); [Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services](http://www.hhs.gov/asl/divisions/divisions.html#dashs); [Congressional Liaison Office](http://www.hhs.gov/asl/divisions/divisions.html#clo); [Office of Oversight and Investigations](http://www.hhs.gov/asl/divisions/divisions.html#ooi)). |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Develops, transmits, provides information about and works to enact the department's legislative and administrative agenda
* Supports implementation of legislation passed by Congress
* Works closely with the White House to advance presidential initiatives relating to health and human services
* Responds to congressional inquiries and notifies congressional offices of grant awards (GrantsNet, TAGGS) made by the department
* Provides technical assistance regarding grants and legislation to members of Congress and their staff and facilitates informational briefings relating to department programs and priorities
* Manages the Senate confirmation process for the secretary and the 19 other HHS presidential appointees who must be confirmed by the Senate
* Prepares witnesses and testimony for congressional hearings
* Coordinates meetings and communications of the secretary and other department officials with members of Congress
* Notifies and coordinates with Congress regarding the secretary's travel and event schedule
* Coordinates department response to congressional oversight and investigations
* Acts as departmental liaison with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and coordinating responses to GAO inquiries
* Serves as liaison to external organizations, including public and private interest groups, with respect to the legislative agenda
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Strong and effective congressional relationships on relevant committees and understanding of congressional/legislative processes
* Strong background in health care policy
* Demonstrated experience in advancing and explaining health care policies
* Understanding of politics as well as policy
* Understanding of the authorization process
* A record of working with both Republicans and Democrats
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| Competencies | * Excellent communication skills
* Ability to establish positive relationships with co-workers and external stakeholders
* Ability to work under high pressure
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |

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| Jim Esquea, (2010-2017): Analyst for Income Security and Medicaid for the Democratic staff of the Senate Budget Committee; Member of Budget Committee for White House Office of Management and Budget under the Clinton Administration |
| Vincent J. Ventimiglia, Jr., (2005-2008): Policy Director of Senate Budget; Health Policy Director of Senate HELP; Director of Government Affairs for Medtronic |
| Jennifer B Young (2003-2005): Senior Counselor to HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt; Professional Staff of the House Ways and Means Committee; Professional Staff on the Senate Finance Committee |

# Endnotes

This position description was created with the help of Russell Reynolds Associates, a global executive search firm.

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)