# POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and human Services**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Finance |
| 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 Deputy Secretary is the second-ranking official at HHS and a key advisor to the Secretary. The Deputy Secretary shall serve as the acting Secretary in the event of a vacancy in that office ([42 U.S.C. §3501 note](http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:42%20section:3501%20edition:prelim)%20OR%20(granuleid:USC-prelim-title42-section3501)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true)).As per the Government Performance and Results (GPRA) Act Modernization Act of 2010, the Deputy Secretary is also the chief operating officer of HHS ([31 U.S.C. §1123](http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:31%20section:1123%20edition:prelim)%20OR%20(granuleid:USC-prelim-title31-section1123)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true)). In this capacity, the deputy secretary is responsible for the operations of the largest civilian department in the federal government; programs related to public health, medical research, food and drug safety; human service programs, child and family services, disease prevention, Indian health and mental health services; and Medicare and Medicaid.  |
| Compensation | Level II $179,700 (5 U.S.C. § 5313)[[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 Deputy Secretary has a small personal staff and is assisted by a principal associate deputy secretary, two associate deputy secretaries and three staff assistants to complete these duties. However, as chief operating officer, the Deputy Secretary will manage people from all over the organization, not just those in his or her direct office, and has access to support from several assistant secretaries. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Executes the President’s and Secretary’s strategic plan for the agency by dealing with the overall operations, managing the individual departments and integrating mission-support functions with program and policy objectives
* Works with peers in other agencies, the Office of Management and Budget, stakeholders (like local or state governments) and, at times, Congress
* Resolves interagency and intradepartmental conflict
* Serves as a key advisor to the secretary on all matters pertaining to the agency
* Ensures that the agency’s components are delivering their programs and services with integrity, and in an effective and efficient manner
* Develops and manages complementary internal management processes that coordinate across programs
* Represents the secretary in public and private meetings including dealings with the White House, Congress, state governments and trade groups
* Oversees internal GPRA processes.
* Works closely with the Secretary, Chief of Staff and CXOs.
* Maintains involvement in the development and approval of HHS regulations
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration]  |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Proven ability and experience leading and managing a large and complex enterprise
* Previous experience with federal government or other large scale enterprise operations
* Understanding of core services, programs and initiatives delivered by the agency’s key departments
* Experience dealing with high-profile stakeholders
* Ability to articulate and communicate the president’s vision for the American health care system to stakeholders and the American public
* Experience leading through unexpected crisis situations (preferred)
* Familiarity with the federal budget process (preferred)
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| Competencies | * Demonstrated ability to resolve conflicts within a large organization
* Comfort leading and managing in ambiguous situations, as deputy secretaries often have very vague or undefined statutory responsibilities and authorities
* Ability to establish positive relationships with co-workers and external stakeholders
* Ability to forge strong congressional relationships (preferred)
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Mary Wakefield (2015-2017) (acting) – Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); Assistant Dean and Professor at the University of North Dakota; Chief of Staff for two United States Senators |
| Bill Corr (2009-2015) – Executive Director of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids; Chief Counsel and Policy Director for Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle; Chief of Staff for the Department of Health and Human Services |
| Tevi Troy (2007-2009) – Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Labor; Policy Director for Sen. John Ashcroft |
| Alex M. Azar II (June 2001- 2007) – General Counsel at HHS; Partner with the law firm of Wiley Rein; Associate with Kirkland & Ellis |

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)