Dear Colleagues:

After five years – and countless hours – one of our most esteemed and accomplished colleagues, Administrator Marilyn Tavenner, has decided to move on from HHS, leaving us at the end of February. Principal Deputy Administrator, Andy Slavitt, has agreed to become the Acting Administrator.

I hope you will join me in thanking Marilyn for her exemplary service, leadership, and historic record of accomplishment.

Marilyn first joined the Department during “snowmageddon” in February 2010. For the last half decade, she has insisted on pushing forward, no matter how severe the storms we faced.

It’s a great testament to the respect she’s earned that Marilyn was the first Administrator to be confirmed by the Senate in six and half years – and she was confirmed with overwhelming, bipartisan support.

Marilyn delivered historic results at the helm of CMS.

Under her watch, the solvency of the Medicare Trust Funds was extended to 2030. In addition, her work on health care quality helped our nation achieve a 17 percent reduction in hospital acquired conditions – saving an estimated 50,000 lives and $12 billion in health care costs.

Marilyn led the effort to accelerate the development and expansion of innovative new health care payment and delivery models. And thanks to her efforts, CMS is a government leader in the use of predictive analytics to help combat waste, fraud and abuse.

It goes without saying that Marilyn will be remembered for her leadership in opening the Health Insurance Marketplace. In so doing, she worked day and night so that millions of Americans could finally obtain the security and peace of mind of quality health insurance at a price they could afford. It’s a measure of her tenacity and dedication that after the tough initial rollout of HealthCare.gov, she helped right the ship, bringing aboard a systems integrator and overseeing an overhaul of the website.

She is a big part of the reason why, as of this past spring, roughly 10 million Americans had gained health coverage since last year – the largest increase in four decades.

Another legacy of Marilyn’s is her ability to attract a talented and dedicated team. We are extremely fortunate that her Principal Deputy Administrator, Andy Slavitt, has agreed to become the Acting Administrator. I know that he will continue to build on Marilyn’s dedication to the mission of CMS.

Andy joined HHS with over 20 years of private sector experience. As Principal Deputy Administrator, he oversees HealthCare.gov and the Department’s work to upgrade the consumer experience. In addition, Andy is responsible for cross-cutting policy and operational coordination for the agency’s Medicare,
Medicaid, CHIP and Marketplace initiatives; combatting health care fraud; reforming health care delivery; and improving health outcomes.

Prior to joining CMS, Andy was the Group Executive Vice President for Optum, where he oversaw the delivery of clinical, technology and operational solutions to health care clients and consumers. He was a key member of the team that helped turn around the website last year.

We are grateful that Andy has agreed to step up – and we’re so thankful for all that Marilyn has done for this Department, for our colleagues, and for the American people. I am personally indebted to Marilyn for her partnership and all that she’s done as I transitioned to HHS and wish her the very best.

Sincerely,

Sylvia M. Burwell
Secretary