



Our mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

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August 16, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

We are writing to follow up on our letter, [dated July 29, 2022](#), on the Head Start Interim Final Rule with Comments (IFC) regarding COVID-19 vaccines and masking. In our letter, 47 state, regional, and national organizations joined us in asking for a final rule by yesterday, August 15, to provide clarity as Head Start programs nationwide prepare for the new school year. With significant frustration and disappointment that a final rule, or any additional guidance, has not been released yet, our question today is: when can we expect a final rule?

This past Thursday, the CDC announced streamlined guidance which advances public health efforts to avoid severe disruption to daily lives and empowers communities and individuals to determine how to protect themselves and others. Despite that new guidance, however, Head Start programs remain subject to conflicting mandates imposed by federal, state, and local governments, as well as the courts. In light of the new CDC guidance, which adds yet another layer of confusion, it is now even more imperative for Head Start programs to have clarity as they head back to school.

Lack of basic, clear guidance will result in children and families losing further access to the critical services Head Start provides. We again urge the Administration to restore the traditional role of local program autonomy in line with the comments we submitted on [December 27, 2021](#).

We await your response.

Sincerely,

Yasmina Vinci  
Executive Director

cc: The White House  
The Hon. Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions  
The Hon. Richard Burr, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions  
The Hon. Bobby Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Education & Labor  
The Hon. Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, House Committee on Education & Labor