

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2024

Mr. Xavier Becerra  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Mr. Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Becerra and Secretary Vilsack,

We write to direct your attention to the “Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD) Study on Alcohol Intake and Health” overseen by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).<sup>1</sup> We respectfully request that you direct SAMHSA to suspend the ICCPUD study until the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (National Academies) completes its “Review of Evidence on Alcohol and Health.”<sup>2</sup>

As you are aware, Congress appropriated \$1.3 million to the USDA in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023<sup>3</sup> and directed the National Academies to assemble a committee of experts to review, evaluate and report on current scientific evidence related to alcohol consumption and specific health outcomes that would inform guidance in the *2025 Dietary Guidelines*. Once the NASEM scientific study has concluded, Congress can provide input on the need for an additional study on adult alcohol consumption from ICCPUD or another entity within HHS.

We believe a dual track of work is duplicative and have serious concerns that ICCPUD is deviating from its primary mission of reducing and preventing underage drinking. As mandated through the enactment of the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP) Act, ICCPUD has been directed to focus on underage drinking. Congress has reauthorized the legislation and reaffirmed ICCPUD’s mission on multiple occasions. Based on the limited information provided on its website, it also appears that ICCPUD plans to conduct its own research and offer recommendations on adult alcohol consumption on an ongoing basis. We question why ICCPUD would chose to redirect limited resources away from its core responsibilities that are meant to fund a national media campaign as well as offer federal grants to community coalitions and the medical community.

We also have reservations about how ICCPUD is conducting its review. Unlike the NASEM review and overall development of the *2025 Dietary Guidelines*, members of the Scientific Review Panel (SRP) were not appropriately vetted for conflicts of interest, studies and recommendations drafted by those on the SRP will be included and interested stakeholders have had limited opportunities to comment and track all but one public meeting held in early August.

Based on the timeline featured on the StopAlcoholAbuse.gov website, it is not too late to suspend the work of the “Alcohol Intake and Health Study” until the National Academies finalizes its assessment of current research. The review by the National Academies is well underway. According to its website, the research panel has met over twenty times since January and expects to complete its work by the end of the year.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/research-resources/alcohol-intake-health.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/review-of-evidence-on-alcohol-and-health>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr2617/BILLS-117hr2617enr.pdf>

For physicians and other medical providers to adopt guidance and convey the information to their patients, and for consumers to follow the guidance, it is critical that any review and recommendations be based on a preponderance of sound science and research that is developed in a transparent manner without any potential for conflict of interest. The secretive process at ICCPUD and the concept of original research on adult alcohol consumption by a committee tasked with preventing underage drinking, jeopardizes the credibility of ICCPUD and its ability to continue its primary role of helping the nation prevent underage drinking.

We appreciate your consideration and request a suspension of ICCPUD's activities on adult consumption at this time.

Sincerely,



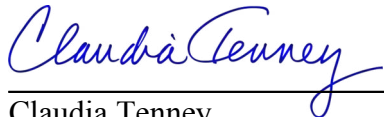
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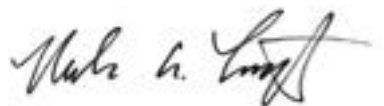
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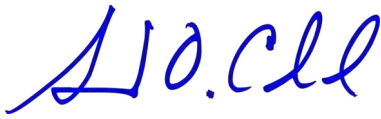
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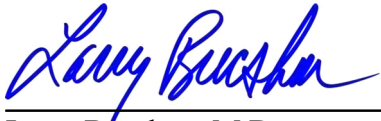
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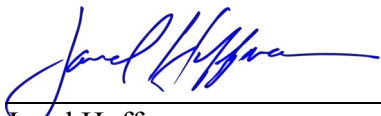
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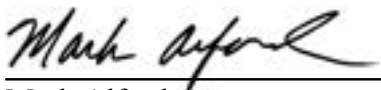
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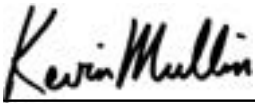
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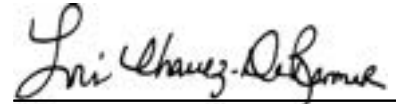
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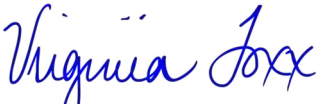
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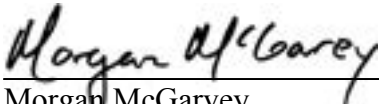
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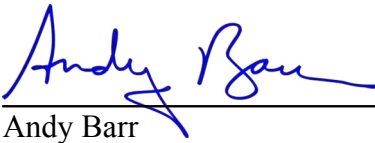
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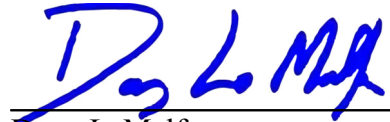
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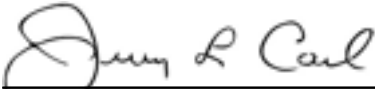
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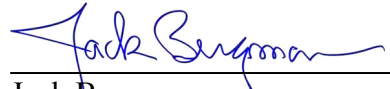
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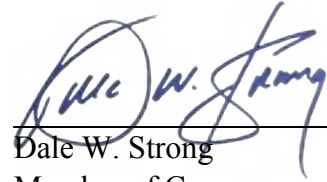
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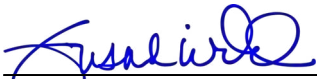
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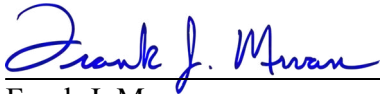
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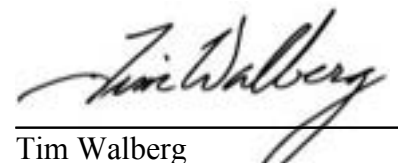
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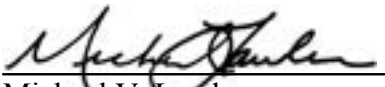
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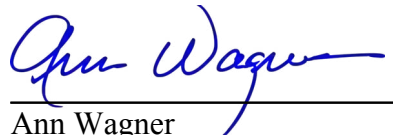
  
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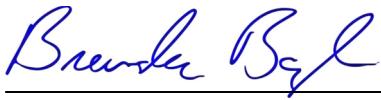
  
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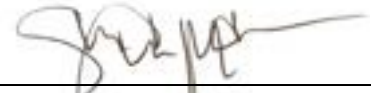
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