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Federal Government Transition Update - 2.5.25 [1]

February 5, 2025 by Natalie Barry [2]

Dear Colleagues,

This week, news sources are reporting Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) staff are entering federal agency headquarters in the Washington D.C. area to gain access to IT systems and gather data on servers with the objective of reducing the government workforce and cutting costs. Two of the agencies visited include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Department of Education [3]. This follows the administration's move to freeze billions of dollars in foreign assistance, suspend humanitarian projects, including grants and contracts, and place employees on leave at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Actions being taken by DOGE, a "temporary organization" that reports directly to the White House and was created via executive order [4], are being questioned for their legality. These include potentially accessing sensitive government files and information. A lawsuit [5] was filed in DC federal court on Monday against the Treasury Department for allowing DOGE representatives access to the Bureau of the Fiscal Service.

Additionally, on February 3, the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) filed a lawsuit [6] in a Maryland district court challenging the executive orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The NADOHE was joined by the American Association of University Professors, the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, and the mayor and city council of Baltimore in their lawsuit. The CU team will continue to monitor the outcomes of this legal challenge and any impact a court ruling could have on our campuses.

Moreover, earlier today, Children's Hospital of Colorado (CHCO) announced [7] it will be making changes to its gender affirming care program for those patients under the age of 19 in line with an Executive Order issued on January 28, 2025. Last week, UCHealth and Denver Health announced that they would be ceasing gender affirming care for patients under 19 years of age. The executive order restricts gender affirming care involving surgery, puberty blockers or hormone therapy. The executive order does not implicate behavioral health care or any medical or behavioral care for patients over 19. Of note, CHCO does not provide gender affirming surgical care to patients, but it does provide puberty blockers and hormone therapy to patients under 19 years of age. Moving forward, CHCO will cease providing puberty blockers and hormone therapy to existing patients after February 15, 2025. CHCO will continue to provide behavioral health support to patients under 19 years of age, as the executive order does not implicate that care. CU supports our clinical partners in their efforts to ensure we are able to treat patients with federal health coverage in line with the executive order.

These issues are rapidly evolving, and we are actively collaborating with other universities,

the national higher education associations, and the Colorado Congressional delegation in real time. We recognize the uncertainty and worry our campus communities are experiencing, including some direct impacts to projects and programs. We are here for you, and we are working closely with the President, Chancellors and our legal team. We encourage you to contact your campus leadership with questions. The Office of University Counsel and the Office of Federal Relations will continue to analyze the potential impact of these actions on the university's mission and the people who work and learn on our campuses. Please visit the CU System Federal Transitions Update [8] page for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

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