

Trump picks acting CDC chief Susan Monarez for permanent post

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By Lena H. Sun
Washington Post

President Donald Trump nominated the acting chief of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be its permanent director Monday, elevating Susan Monarez after the [abrupt withdrawal](#) of his previous nominee earlier this month.

Monarez, a biosecurity expert, has been serving as the CDC's acting director since January. She came from another federal agency, the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health. In a [social media post](#), Trump said Monarez will work closely with [Robert F. Kennedy Jr.](#), who heads the Department of Health and Human Services, CDC's parent agency.

Trump praised Monarez for her experience promoting innovation, transparency and strong public health systems.

“As an incredible mother and dedicated public servant, Dr. Monarez understands the importance of protecting our children, our communities, and our future,” Trump said in the post. “Americans have lost confidence in the CDC due to political bias and disastrous mismanagement.”

Earlier this month, the White House [withdrew the nomination](#) of former Florida congressman Dave Weldon, who questioned [vaccine safety](#), to lead the CDC amid concerns that he could not be confirmed by the Senate. Weldon told the media his nomination was withdrawn because “there were not enough votes to get me confirmed.”

If confirmed, Monarez would be the first director of the CDC to be voted on by the Senate under a change passed by Congress in 2022. Previous CDC directors were able to assume their positions without undergoing confirmation.

The CDC, a \$9 billion agency, makes vaccine recommendations, works to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity, tracks opioid overdoses and fights infectious-disease outbreaks, including listeria infections and the Zika virus. In recent years, the CDC has been [under intense scrutiny](#) by conservatives in Congress regarding its scope and mission. They have proposed budget cuts to eliminate programs they say aren't central to its core mission of fighting infectious disease.

Monarez would oversee the agency as it tries to recapture public trust in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Like other federal agencies, the CDC is expected to face deep cuts to personnel and programs as part of the Trump administration's slashing of government bureaucracy. The CDC is leading the response to a [rapidly expanding measles](#) outbreak in Texas and New Mexico, in which [two people have died](#), and also to an ongoing [bird flu outbreak](#) and growing vaccine hesitancy.

Monarez has also served at the White House in the Office of Science and Technology Policy and on the National Security Council, working on issues including biomedical innovation, antimicrobial resistance and pandemic preparedness. She has also held leadership positions at the Department of Homeland Security.