

HEALTHWATCH

## FDA planning for fewer food and drug inspections due to layoffs, officials say



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Senior Food and Drug Administration leaders are planning for cutbacks to the number of routine food and drug inspections

conducted by the agency, multiple officials say, due to steep layoffs this week in support staff.

Around 170 workers were cut from the FDA's Office of Inspections and Investigations, according to two federal health officials who were not authorized to speak publicly.

The Department of Health and Human Services has said layoffs ordered by Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., with some 10,000 workers let go from the department, would not directly cut FDA's inspections staff. But in meetings among federal health officials, the agency's remaining leaders have grappled with how to deal with major delays and disruptions caused by the loss of administrative and management staff who had supported the agency's inspectors, according to two FDA officials.

"These administrative functions are being streamlined as part of HHS' transformation initiative to make the agency more efficient and Be the best to know inspectors were not impacted and this critical work will continue," an HHS spokesperson said in a statement.



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The inspections and investigations office will now need to work with FDA's drug, device and food centers to reprioritize their workload for the rest of the year, one official said. ing routine "surveillance inspections"




One of the biggest immediate impacts on the agency's inspectors stems from the elimination of the office's travel operations division, one official said. The team's work ranged from booking flights to coordinating with the State Department to secure

While current inspections are still taking place, multiple FDA officials said that cuts are likely to worsen delays caused by other challenges introduced by the Trump administration's efforts to cut spending in recent months.

As one example, multiple officials said that field operations have been hampered by a new government-wide \$1 limit on spending cases that limit requires a cumbersome approval process.

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