



# Dawn O'Connell

**Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response  
US Department of Health and Human Services**

Ms. Dawn O'Connell serves as the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The ASPR is the Secretary's principal advisor on public health emergencies, and her office leads the nation in preventing, responding to, and recovering from the adverse health effects of man-made and naturally occurring disasters. The office coordinates interagency activities between HHS, other federal agencies, and state and local officials responsible for emergency preparedness and the protection of the civilian population from public health emergencies.

Prior to this role, Ms. O'Connell served as the Senior Counselor to Secretary Becerra for COVID-19. She was also the Director of the US Office for the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation (CEPI), a global partnership to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics. As director, she was responsible for managing the broad spectrum of CEPI's US and North American interests including its relationships with US and North American-based stakeholders, government entities, and industry partners.

O'Connell served as a Senior Counselor to Secretary Sylvia Burwell and Deputy Chief of Staff to Secretary Sebelius at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) during the Obama-Biden Administration. In these roles, O'Connell advised the Secretaries on high-priority domestic policy, global health and humanitarian issues, including infectious diseases, public health emergencies, and refugees. She worked with HHS leaders, the White House, and other federal and international partners, to resolve key policy challenges, lead implementation, and drive progress toward Administration goals. O'Connell received a Bachelor of Arts in literature from Vanderbilt University and a Juris Doctor from Tulane University School of Law. She is an avid runner, and lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband Ben and two daughters, Frannie and Maddie.