

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2018—17:11

## After a weekend of negotiations and demonstrations, shutdown disrupts health agencies and services

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**Update 2.** Congress approved legislation to fund government operations through February 8, which President Trump signed late on January 22. The budget agreement ended the shutdown and also provides funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program for six years.

**Update.** The shutdown is expected to end Tuesday, January 23, after the House of Representatives approves legislation that passed the Senate this afternoon providing temporary funding to continue operations through February 8. The president is also expected to sign the bill.

This morning, many federal agencies began the third day of the shutdown and the first workday without thousands of their usual employees, who are considered “non-essential” and have an unscheduled, unpaid day off. Nearly 41 000 employees at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) stayed home, including 42 percent of the Food and Drug Administration, 63 percent of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 77 percent of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 64 percent of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and 93 percent of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

On Friday, the CDC updated details of this year’s unusually intense flu season, in which 8900 people have been hospitalized and 30 children have died. Although the HHS contingency plan stated otherwise, a CDC spokeswoman told *The Washington Post* late Friday that the agency had decided to continue its response to influenza and other urgent disease outbreaks in the event of a government shutdown, including analysis of influenza data from state health departments.

Nearly 95 percent of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would be missing, under its **Contingency Plan for the Shutdown of the Agency Due to a Funding Hiatus**, leaving in charge an estimated 781 employees “considered necessary to protect life and property.” However, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt sent a memo to his 14 449 staff members Friday assuring them that the agency had enough funding to remain open for a short time if there was a government shutdown. “All EPA employees should follow their normal work schedule for the week of January 22, 2018,” he **wrote**, promising additional details if the shutdown continued.



WASHINGTON, DC—JANUARY 20, 2018: First year George Washington University medical student Madhuri Rao attends the Women’s March rally

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Active military personnel and about half of the defense department’s civilian workforce will be on duty, although they may not be paid until after the shutdown. Air traffic controllers, the postal service and Social Security disability and retirement payments, veterans’ hospitals, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, and other essential services are not affected by the partial government shutdown.

Although the federal government will be running with a skeleton staff in many agencies, the shutdown doesn’t save money in the long run. In 2013, a 16-day shutdown cost \$24 billion in lost services and wages, according to an analysis by the financial services company Standard & Poors.

Senate Republican majority leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky blamed the shutdown on Democrats who insisted on addressing the problem of 800 000 undocumented young adults who were illegally brought to this country as children. Under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, they were allowed to stay and were eligible for work permits. President Trump has said he would end the program if Congress did not fund a wall along the US–Mexico border.

“So who pays the price for that?” McConnell said last night on the Senate floor. “Health care for needy children, training and resources for our men and women in uniform, care for our veterans who came home and survivor benefits for families of heroes who did not. Full funding for the CDC, for the NIH and for routine safety inspections of food and medicine.”

He accused the Democrats of treating continued funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and