Trump's CDC Director Resigns After Tobacco Investments Discovered

Brenda Fitzgerald reportedly said she resigned because she could not divest from certain financial interests "in a definitive time period." A Politico article from Tuesday reports that Fitzgerald purchased shares in a tobacco company shortly after becoming CDC director.

The former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officially resigned her position today after just six months, due to "complex financial interests." She was repeatedly forced her to recuse herself from the agency's activities, unable to testify before lawmakers on public health matters. And on Tuesday, January 30th, Politico reported:

> *The Trump administration's top public health official bought shares in a tobacco company one month into her leadership of the agency charged with reducing tobacco use — the leading cause of preventable disease and death and an issue she had long championed.*
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> *The stock was one of about a dozen new investments that Brenda Fitzgerald, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, made after she took over the agency's top job, according to documents obtained by POLITICO. Fitzgerald has since come under congressional scrutiny for slow walking divestment from older holdings that government officials said posed potential conflicts of interest.*

Fitzgerald is 71 one years old. She is a physician who served as the Georgia public health commissioner until her appointment to the CDC post this last July. She said she

and her husband had divested from many stock holdings in an interview late last year, but that she and her husband were legally obligated to continue certain investments in cancer detection and health information technologies. Fitzgerald apparently had to avoid government business that might affect those specific financial interests.

> *It is unacceptable that the person responsible for leading our nation's public health efforts has, for months, been unable to fully engage in the critical work she was appointed to do." — Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash*

> *Dr. Fitzgerald's tenure was unfortunately the latest example of the Trump Administration's dysfunction and lax ethical standards. I hope the incoming Secretary of Health — nominated because his predecessor resigned for using taxpayer dollars for his personal luxury travel — will encourage President Trump to choose a new CDC Director who is truly prepared to focus on families and communities." — Sen. Murray*

Senator sent Fitzgerald a letter saying that the necessary recusals prevented Fitzgerald from engaging on public health issues like cancer and the massive opioid epidemic. Murray had voiced his concerns regarding Fitzgerald's financial investments and the recusals necessary to avoid the aforementioned conflicts of interest since July. In December, the senator sent Fitzgerald a letter saying those recusals prevented her from fully engaging on public health issues including cancer and the opioid epidemic.

Fitzgerald had dismissed those concerns, saying that she was following ethics rules laid out by HHS and that her recusals were "very limited."

About three hours after HHS announced Fitzgerald's resignation, the CDC's chief operating officer, Sherri Berger, sent an agencywide email that announced Fitzgerald's resignation and said Anne Schuchat, the principal deputy, will

be acting director effective Wednesday.

Recommended Reading:

- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *Start Eating Like That and Start Eating Like This – Your Guide to Homeostasis Through Diet*
- *How to Make the Healthiest Smoothies – 4 Recipes*
- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*