

**TESTIMONY OF ROBERT GORDON  
BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
FEBRUARY 9, 2022**

Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, Members of the Committee, thank you for considering my nomination to be the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). I am honored by President Biden's decision to nominate me, and I look forward, if confirmed, to serving under the leadership of Secretary Becerra.

Before beginning, I would like to thank my family for their love and support. My wife Catherine and older son Silas are here today.

Government funding decisions each day make an enormous difference to millions of Americans in every corner of the country. For all of us, government must run as effectively and efficiently as possible.

If confirmed, I will use data, evidence, and evaluation to make government deliver results, strengthen the integrity and transparency of taxpayer-funded programs, and advance equity.

This has been the work of my career, spanning three decades in federal, state and local governments, in leadership roles handling health and human services, and in key positions managing budget and finance. For more than four years, I served as a senior official at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, including as Acting Deputy Director. While at OMB I played a key part in launching evidence-based initiatives at four federal agencies. These included HHS's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, which now funds 19 service delivery models supported by solid evidence. Together with HHS leadership, including the official in the role for which I am nominated, I also worked to develop the Head Start recompetition, innovations in child welfare, and improvements in programs for the aging.

In this period, I also helped negotiate bipartisan budget agreements to keep the government open and the country from defaulting on its debts. And I had particular responsibility for program integrity investments to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

The private and nonprofit sectors offer important lessons for government. After leaving OMB and becoming the Senior Vice President of Finance and Global Strategy for the non-profit College Board, I worked as part of a team to reform procurement processes, cut organizational costs, and drive technology changes that improved services for students and schools alike.

That experience informed my work as the director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, an agency with 14,000 employees and a \$27 billion budget. I played a key part in the state's response to COVID-19, expanded access to health coverage, drove improvements in child welfare programs, increased use of effective approaches to mental health and substance use disorders, and cut technology costs while improving customer service.

One of my proudest accomplishments in Michigan was ending severe delays in delivery of Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. When I arrived, the state had just rolled out a flawed new system which meant that more than 30 percent of Michiganders in some rural counties were not receiving needed help within the required 30 days. Legislators in both parties were angry, and rightly so. In partnership with extraordinary colleagues, we listened to frontline staff, improved technology, shifted work patterns, and held ourselves accountable with a public dashboard showing our progress each week. Within a few months, rural counties were performing as well as others, and we went on to simplify and improve the delivery of benefits in ways that earned national praise. Should I be confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources, I would apply the same performance focus at HHS.

As the response to COVID-19 continues, the work of HHS has never been more important. And it has never been more *personal* for me. Among more than 900,000 Americans who have died from COVID was my father, Alan Gordon. A psychiatrist who spent decades working on behalf of homeless individuals and ex-offenders, he inspired me to public service.

I would be honored to play my part, as HHS's chief financial officer, in sustaining a robust COVID response—and in strengthening so many vital HHS programs—from cancer research to the Indian Health Services to Medicare. Should I be confirmed, I would work with President Biden, Secretary Becerra and Members of Congress to fund health and human services programs that work.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.