

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of Health and Human Services

April 28, 2009

The President. Congratulations, Madam Secretary.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. Thank you, sir.

The President. Here we go. We're just going to make a brief statement. I am thrilled to have Kathleen Sebelius as my new Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Obviously, we have a lot to do to make sure that health care is affordable for the American people, to deal with critical issues like food safety. But we wanted to swear her in right away because we've got a significant public health challenge that requires her immediate attention, and that is the H1N1 flu outbreak that we've seen initially in Mexico and we now see over a dozen cases here in the United States.

It is something that we have to monitor very carefully. The officials who have been in charge, including the Acting Director at the CDC, those at Department of Homeland Security, have done an outstanding job, a superb job, in managing the situation up to this point.

But we need all hands on deck, and so I am thrilled that we have Secretary Sebelius taking the reins. She is going to be immediately briefed on the issues that we're working on right now. I expect her to hit the ground running, and I have every confidence that given her experience as a Governor who's managed crises before, who's worked on public health issues since she's been in public life, she is the right person at the right time for the job.

So congratulations. We are thrilled, and you are going to do a great job.

Secretary Sebelius. Thank you, sir. Honored to serve.

The President. Thank you.

All right, thanks, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Richard E. Besser, Acting Director, Centers for Disease Control. These remarks were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 29.

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