

**From:** [A Message from the Acting Commissioner](#)  
**To:** [FDA-Wide](#)  
**Subject:** Personnel News  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 23, 2021 10:03:19 AM  
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## A Message from the Acting Commissioner



Dear Colleagues,

I'm emailing to announce that Dr. Amy Abernethy, FDA's Principal Deputy Commissioner and Acting Chief Information Officer, will be leaving the agency in the coming weeks.

I'm very sorry to see the FDA lose a talented and inspiring senior leader like Amy, but I take heart in Amy's enduring accomplishments at the agency. Amy's innovative spirit is renowned in the medical field and she has a unique understanding of how to harness new technologies for the benefit of patients and the public health. But those who have worked with her directly know that she is also uniquely skilled as a manager and a mentor. Throughout multiple Commissioner transitions and a historic pandemic, Amy's focus on the FDA's core technology operations has resulted in a remarkable modernization of the agency's technology and data practices. More than anything else, this modernization has been about the people behind technology at the FDA and how they can perform their work to best support our mission. This focus on FDA staff and on core operational excellence will ensure that Amy's impact on the FDA remains long after she leaves the agency.

Amy has been a relentless advocate for improving the science that informs FDA decision-making. Early in her tenure here, she recognized that the FDA could not credibly advance the use of novel data sources to support regulatory decision-making until our own data tools and expertise were strengthened. Rather than make this observation from the sidelines, she volunteered to take on the role of Acting Chief Information Officer and lead our modernization activities.

When COVID-19 struck, Amy rapidly assembled flexible teams and projects to understand how novel data and rigorous analysis techniques could be deployed in support of the FDA's response to the pandemic. Amy's insight that a diverse group of public health and data experts from multiple sectors could come together to work on pandemic-related analysis projects in a transparent, collaborative setting led to the creation of the COVID-19 Evidence Accelerator, which has emerged as a unique and promising model for advancing the science of public health.

I, like many of you who have worked with Amy, will surely miss her inspiring enthusiasm and her principled and pragmatic approach to problem solving. Amy plans to depart the agency in mid to late April. We will use the next couple of weeks to ensure a deliberate, well-planned transition of Amy's many responsibilities, including the PDC and CIO roles. We will follow up with more information.

I am sincerely grateful for Amy's service to the FDA and to the public.

Sincerely,

Janet

**Janet Woodcock, M.D.**  
**Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs**

