

Peer Review

Review of: "Expanding Contracting Authorities Across the Department of Health and Human Services Family of Agencies to Address Critical Public Health Needs"

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The text examines the CDC's ICATT (Increasing Community Access to Testing) program through a legal-administrative lens. The author identifies the conflict between the rigidity of the FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulation) and the agility required during sanitary crises. However, the manuscript fails to transition from the realm of a management report to that of scientific production.

Methodological and Structural Deficiencies (Core Critique)

1. Absence of Research Protocol: The manuscript lacks a "Materials and Methods" section. There is no clarity on how the data were extracted, the cutoff period for the analysis, or the study design (e.g., Case Study? Public Policy Evaluation? Theoretical Essay?).
2. Opacity in Partner Selection: The text mentions the awarding of sole-source contracts to four commercial pharmacies. It lacks a description of the political, technical, logistical, or epidemiological criteria for choosing these specific entities over others.
3. Vague Object and Objective: The article fluctuates between historical description, case study, and political advocacy. The introduction fails to define a clear research question. Is the objective to test a hypothesis or merely to report an experience? This ambiguity dissolves the academic "common thread."

Gaps in Public Health and Epidemiology

- Means vs. Ends Dichotomy: The text focuses excessively on input indicators (contracts and waivers). For a public health article, the success metric cannot be solely the number of points of sale (pharmacies), but rather the actual impact on the community.
- Lack of Outcome Data: The author fails to present data regarding:

Volume: How many tests were actually performed?

Equity: What was the uptake rate in populations with a high Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) compared to the previous period?

Outcome: Was there any measurable impact on the local transmission curve?

Data Integration: Expansion via private entities raises critical issues regarding epidemiological surveillance and data interoperability—points the text touches upon but fails to explore in depth.

Conclusion and Revision Recommendations The work possesses undeniable informative value; however, its current format is that of a Management Report (White Paper) rather than an original research article.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.