

# [***EXCLUSIVE: Former FDA Official Cozied Up To Activists Months Before Joining Them, Emails Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1T-2T51-JBFB-H023-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-08-16T143054Z_3_LYNXMPEI7F0JR_RTROPTP_4_HEALTH-CORONAVIRUS-USA-FDA-scaled-e1660764950159.jpg)

A former senior U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) official hobnobbed with employees from an anti-tobacco nonprofit just months before coming on as the group's CEO, emails show.

Kathy Crosby, who played a leading role in shaping public health policy while [*serving*](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kathy-crosby-4449013) as the director of Health Communication and Education at the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products, [*became*](https://truthinitiative.org/who-we-are/our-team/kathy-crosby) the president and CEO of the [*Truth Initiative*](https://truthinitiative.org/), an anti-tobacco and anti-nicotine activist organization, in August 2023.

Prior to her exit from the FDA, emails obtained by the Functional Government Initiative (FGI) and exclusively shared with the Daily Caller News Foundation show Crosby hobnobbing with Truth Initiative employees and even corresponding with the group's then CEO about setting up a meeting. [***(RELATED: Activist Group's Leader Declines To Participate In House Hearing On Her Org's Alleged Influence Over Biden Admin)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/30/pueblo-action-alliance-leader-haaland-decline-show-up-testify-hearing-activists/)

“The emails that we have seen raise some serious red flags,” Michael Chamberlain, director of the nonpartisan watchdog group Protect the Public's Trust, told the DCNF.

“A federal employee is prohibited from accepting gifts, including comped tickets to conferences and galas, that are offered to her because of her status as a federal employee,” Chamberlain said. “That Ms. Crosby appears to have solicited the invitation to the gala she attended compounds the problematic nature of this episode. That she may have leveraged the event as an opportunity to seek outside employment is icing on the cake.”

Federal employees are [*barred*](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-XVI/subchapter-B/part-2635/subpart-B/section-2635.202) both from soliciting gifts “to be given because of the employee's official position” as well as from accepting those gifts. Additionally, they are [*prohibited*](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-XVI/subchapter-B/part-2635/subpart-G) from using their office for “private gain.” FDA employees are also [*barred*](https://www.fda.gov/files/medical%20devices/published/Standards-for-Ethical-Conduct-for-Employees-of-the-Executive-Branch-%28PDF%29.pdf) from “seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.”

In April 2022, the Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids (CTFK) offered Crosby free tickets to its 2022 gala. Crosby was busy that year, so she declined the tickets but asked CTFK to “keep [her] in mind for next year's event.”

Roughly a year later, Crosby responded to the same email thread and asked the CTFK if it would be “extending an invitation to any FDA colleagues to attend” the 2023 gala. Hours later, the organization offered Crosby complimentary tickets, which she then accepted, saying that she “should definitely be able to join” them this year.

Emails show that Crosby indeed attended the May 18, 2023, CTFK gala and networked with employees of the Truth Initiative while there.

Shortly after attending CTFK's gala, Crosby emailed then-Truth Initiative president and CEO Robin Koval on May 22 to schedule a meeting so the two could “catch-up.” In the email, she also mentioned that she had already met with Howard Koh, a [*member*](https://truthinitiative.org/who-we-are/our-team) of the organization's board of directors, and other staff at the gala. Koval and Crosby ultimately agreed to meet on May 24, 2023.

“There's a reason taxpayers are troubled by incestuous relationships between government agencies and activist groups and public health agencies are proving to be no exception,” Functional Government Initiative spokesperson Peter McGinnis said.

“These activist groups have business before the agencies-we know, for example, that [Trust Initiative] lobbies the FDA to increase fines on tobacco product manufacturers and sellers, while also spending millions to advocate for new product bans,” McGinnis continued. “It's a coup for [Trust Initiative] to land a CEO who knows her way around the FDA, and it's a lucrative jump for Ms. Crosby.”

On Aug. 15, 2023, Truth Initiative's board [*announced*](https://truthinitiative.org/press/press-release/truth-initiative-board-announces-appointment-kathy-crosby-new-ceo-and-president) its appointment of Crosby as the group's president and CEO. Following the announcement, and while Crosby was still at the FDA, multiple Truth Initiative employees reached out via email to congratulate her.

“I just wanted to reach out and send a note to say congratulations,” one email from the group's [*vice president of communications*](https://truthinitiative.org/who-we-are/our-team/sarah-shank), Sarah Shank, reads. “It's always a pleasure working with you and your team at FDA and I'm beyond thrilled to work with you in this new capacity here at Truth Initiative.”

“So excited for this next chapter with our organization,” Tina Morgan, the organization's vice president of sponsorships, said.

Truth Initiative and Crosby didn't respond to requests for comment.

“During Kathy Crosby's 12 years as the Director for CTP's Office of Health Communication and Education, she frequently communicated via email, phone calls, and in-person meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, including those from national public health organizations, industry, media, and state/local organizations,” an FDA spokesperson told the DCNF.

Crosby “immediately” notified the FDA that she was looking for a job outside the government and “recused herself from any official actions that would financially impact her future employer,” the spokesperson said, adding that Crosby's attendance at the gala was also “reviewed and approved by FDA ethics officials” prior to the event.

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Pack-of-Marlboro-Cigarettes-by-Jonathan-Weiss.-By-Shutterstock.-scaled-e1606269767751.jpg)

Pack of Marlboro Cigarettes (Jonathan Weiss/Shutterstock)

In 2022, the Truth Initiative was hard at work attempting to influence policy through the FDA and other federal agencies.

According to the nonprofit's 2022 annual [*report*](https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2023/09/Truth_Annual%20Report%202022_final_web2.pdf), they submitted 14 comments to federal agencies, provided “policy analyses and research” to inform FDA policymaking, urged the FDA to act against popular synthetic nicotine products, like ZYN, and recruited youth activists to submit comments to the FDA regarding its proposed rule to remove flavored cigars and menthol cigarettes from the market.

During her time at the FDA, Crosby was involved in crafting health warnings for cigarette packages and advertisements, formulating marketing restrictions for new tobacco products and shaping national policy broadly, [*according*](https://truthinitiative.org/who-we-are/our-team/kathy-crosby) to her Truth Initiative biography.

Crosby spearheaded “public education and regulatory communication programs” which aided the federal government in successfully implementing the Tobacco Control Act, which [*regulates*](https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/rules-regulations-and-guidance/family-smoking-prevention-and-tobacco-control-act-overview#:~:text=The%20Tobacco%20Control%20Act%3A,of%20Ingredients%20in%20Tobacco%20Products) how tobacco products can be marketed.

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