

## *Organ Donation*

Question 1. The Senate Finance Committee has been conducting an almost five-year bipartisan investigation into the failings of monopoly organ contractors, including both organ procurement organizations (OPOs) and the national organ procurement and transplantation network (OPTN). Yet despite our clear findings of deadly patient safety lapses and a shocking lack of oversight, as well as ongoing national investigative reporting including related to both state and federal law enforcement investigations, serious concerns persist about the adequacy of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' oversight of this critical area of healthcare. What steps would you take to address this challenge?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that the law is being followed.**

Question 2. Can you commit that HHS will play a strong role in oversight of the US organ transplant system?

**Response: Yes.**

Question 3. Specifically, will you pledge to work with this bipartisan Congressional investigation as well as law enforcement to make sure that there is immediate accountability to the fullest extent of the law for organ contractors who have mistreated patients or aimed to interfere with Medicare's integrity?

**Response: Yes.**

## *Pandemic Preparedness*

Question 4. Do you support mandating that health care workers receive vaccinations to protect themselves and the people they care for in the event of a pandemic?

**Response: No.**

Question 5. What specific steps would you take to ensure all nursing homes are constantly equipped with adequate supplies of personal protective equipment?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to hearing from nursing homes to understand their particular challenges in the procurement of personal protective equipment.**

Question 6. What do you believe HHS should be doing now to guard against potential future supply chain challenges in a next public health emergency?

**Response: If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our HHS assets are well-prepared to respond to the next public health emergency.**

**Question 7.** What incentives and workforce initiatives would you support to encourage recruitment and retention of nursing home workers during a pandemic?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to evaluate needs with respect to recruitment and retention of nursing home workers to protect the most vulnerable.**

**Question 8.** How would you ensure nursing homes continue to be staffed at safe staffing levels during a pandemic?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to evaluate needs with respect to recruitment and retention of nursing home workers to protect the most vulnerable.**

**Question 9.** With bird flu already spreading across the U.S., people need to know your plan to manage this type of challenge. How would you coordinate a complex public health response across federal agencies, state governments, and the agriculture industry?

**Response: Should H5N1 grow into a greater public health concern, the HHS Secretary has unique authorities to surveil transmission, communicate appropriately, and ensure a coordinated whole of government approach. If confirmed, I will work to aggressively address any threats to the health and safety of the American public.**

**Question 10.** How would you ensure that accurate, science-based information reaches Americans during a pandemic?

**Response: I will bring radical transparency to HHS to increase public trust; this in turn will engage more people.**

**Question 11.** Will your opposition to vaccines impact your interest and ability to protect the American people if another pandemic were to hit our nation?

**Response: I am not anti-vaccine; I support transparency and sound data for vaccines**

**Question 12.** What do you know about the current and widespread outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) and its potential to become a pandemic?

**Response: Should H5N1 grow into a greater public health concern, the HHS Secretary has unique authorities to surveil transmission, communicate appropriately, and ensure a coordinated whole of government approach. If confirmed, I will work to aggressively address any threats to the health and safety of the American public.**

**Question 13.** In your view, what role should vaccines play at this stage, both in controlling outbreaks in livestock and reducing the risk of spread to humans?

**Response: If confirmed, I will work with the US Department of Agriculture, FDA, CDC, NIH, ASPR, and all other key federal agencies on effective pandemic preparedness in order to control outbreaks in livestock in order to reduce the risk of spread to humans.**

### ***Prescription Drugs***

**Question 14.** Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, CMS is now required to negotiate directly with drug companies to determine the price of certain high-cost drugs covered by Medicare. CMS finished negotiations for the first 10 drugs selected in August, and is required to select the next round of drugs for negotiation by February 1. Based on 2022 prices, this first round of negotiations will save Medicare an estimated \$6 billion for those 10 drugs alone. Do you believe Medicare should have authority to negotiate drugs?

**Response: If confirmed, I will follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 15.** On December 4, 2024, you and Donald Trump dined with Albert Bourla (CEO of Pfizer), Dave Ricks (CEO of Eli Lilly), and Steve Ubl (CEO of PhRMA) at Mar-a-Lago. Was Medicare drug price negotiation discussed during this dinner?

**Response: No.**

Question a. If yes, what specifically was discussed?

**Response: N/A**

Question b. If not, have you fielded any subsequent inquiries from pharmaceutical companies requesting changes to how Medicare negotiates drug prices?

**Response: No**

**Question 16.** Will you confirm, in writing, that you are committed to using Medicare drug price negotiation to get the best deal possible for seniors and people with disabilities on prescription drug prices?

**Question 17.** Big Pharma’s request to “pause” negotiation is clearly unlawful, especially given the specific duties and timelines for the Secretary under the Inflation Reduction Act’s negotiation provisions. Please confirm in writing that you will follow the law and reject Big Pharma’s request to pause Medicare drug price negotiation.

**Question 18.** Will you commit to rejecting use of demonstration authorities, such as those under Section 402 and Section 1115A, to change Medicare drug price negotiation in a manner that would increase drug costs for seniors and people with disabilities, reduce the number of drugs eligible for negotiation, or delay negotiations on certain drugs?

**Question 19.** Will you commit to rejecting changes to the Medicare drug negotiation guidance that would increase drug costs for seniors and people with disabilities, reduce the number of drugs eligible for negotiation, or delay negotiations on certain drugs?

**Question 20.** In your role as Secretary, you would advise Donald Trump on major health policy issues before Congress. Would you recommend that Donald Trump oppose legislative changes to Medicare drug price negotiation that would increase drug costs for seniors and people with disabilities, reduce the number of drugs eligible for negotiation, or delay negotiations on certain drugs?

**Question 21.** Would you recommend to Donald Trump that the Trump administration defend Medicare drug price negotiation against attacks by Big Pharma and its allies in court?

**Response 315-320: The issue of drug pricing is an issue of great concern to many Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs, and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 22.** Will you make experts in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) available to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to ensure continued defense of the law and otherwise ensure appropriate coordination between HHS and DOJ?

**Response: If confirmed, I will ensure HHS will collaborate with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to help ensure that the DOJ can, consistent with the Administration's positions, mount an appropriate defense of federal laws and regulations. The decision when and how to use expert testimony in litigation rests with the DOJ. HHS will respond to requests for expert testimony consistent with the ethics laws and regulations.**

**Question 23.** Under the law's Medicare drug price negotiation provisions, Medicare can negotiate lower prices on small molecule drugs seven years after those drugs have been approved by FDA—with lower negotiated prices taking effect in Medicare after nine years. One of the items on Big Pharma's policy wish list is to delay seniors' and other beneficiaries' access to lower prices on small molecule drugs until such drugs have been on the market for 13 years. Do you oppose delaying beneficiaries' access to lower Medicare-negotiated prices on these medicines?

**Question 24.** Another item on Big Pharma's policy wish list is to reduce the number of drugs eligible for negotiation by changing the definition of "qualified single source drug." Would you oppose changes to or reinterpretations of this definition that would reduce beneficiaries' access to lower negotiated prices?

**Response 322-323: If confirmed, I plan to follow the law implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 25.** As you know, no Republican voted in favor of Medicare drug price negotiation when the law passed in 2022, and Republicans have been steadfast in their opposition ever since. At our hearing, you seemed to express support for Medicare drug price negotiation. Do you disagree with Republicans on this issue?

**Question 26.** This month, House Republicans circulated a survey of policy options for their reconciliation package. The survey asked for member feedback on adding up to \$20 billion to our deficit to “Reform IRA’s Drug Policies.” Republicans appear to be considering providing a massive multi-billion handout to Big Pharma on the backs of taxpayers, seniors, and people with disabilities. Would you encourage Donald Trump to oppose including Big Pharma IRA handouts in the Republican reconciliation package?  
**Response 324-325: If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 27.** Do you commit to refrain from making changes to Medicare drug price negotiation that would raise drug costs for seniors with cancer?

**Question 28.** Do you commit to refrain from making changes to Medicare drug price negotiation that would raise drug costs for seniors with diabetes?

**Question 29.** Do you commit to refrain from making changes to Medicare drug price negotiation that would raise drug costs for seniors with cardiovascular disease?

**Question 30.** Do you commit to refrain from making changes to Medicare drug price negotiation that would raise drug costs for seniors with psoriasis?

**Question 31.** Do you commit to refrain from making changes to Medicare drug price negotiation that would raise drug costs for seniors with rheumatoid arthritis?

**Question 32.** Do you commit to refrain from making changes to Medicare drug price negotiation that would raise drug costs for seniors with chronic kidney disease?  
**Response 326-331: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. I appreciate that prescription drugs play an important role in meeting many American’s health care needs, particularly those with chronic conditions. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 33.** Do you support the ability of HHS to collect price gouging penalties from manufacturers that increase drug prices faster than the rate of inflation?

**Question 34.** Do you believe drug manufacturers should have to pay such price gouging penalties in the commercial market?

**Response 332-333: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 35.** In 2023, the seven biggest pharmaceutical companies raked in \$70 billion in profits, while a third of Americans reported they couldn't afford the medication they needed. You claimed you would stand up to Big Pharma but shortly after the election, you dined with Donald Trump and the CEOs of Eli Lilly and Pfizer at Mar-a-Lago. Now it is reported that the same drug companies are expecting the Trump administration to pause the Medicare drug price negotiations that will save seniors \$1.5 billion and taxpayers \$6 billion in the first year alone. What did you discuss at this meeting?

**Response: I do not recall what was discussed at the dinner you reference. As I stated at my hearing, if confirmed, my core values as HHS Secretary will be transparency, rigorous scientific-based decision making, and a commitment to the good health of every American.**

**Question 36.** Have you met with health insurance or PBM executives since being nominated as HHS Secretary? If yes, which ones?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 37.** Have you met with patient group executives since being nominated as HHS Secretary? If yes, which groups?

**Response: I have been meeting with and working with patient groups my entire career and will continue to do so.**

**Question 38.** Have you met with consumer group executives since being nominated as HHS Secretary? If yes, which groups?

**Response: I have been meeting with and working with consumer groups my entire career and will continue to do so.**

**Question 39.** Do you intend to amend the guidance for the prescription drug negotiation program for the 2027 benefit year? If so, what provisions might you alter?

**Question 40.** Will you be adhering to the implementation schedule for the 2027 for negotiating Maximum Fair Prices for the 15 drugs selected for negotiation?

**Question 41.** Do you intend to announce maximum fair prices for the 2027 list of selected drugs by November 2025?

**Question 42.** Will you ensure that maximum fair prices negotiated by the Biden Administration for the first 10 selected drugs go into effect on January 1, 2026?

**Question 43.** Will you be issuing new guidance for the Medicare prescription drug negotiation programs that addresses Part B drugs and renegotiation on the time schedule set out by the Inflation Reduction Act?

**Question 44.** Would you oppose policy changes that would remove cancer drug Imbruvica from the list of drugs selected for Medicare negotiation?

**Question 45.** Would you oppose policy changes that would remove cancer drug Calquence from the list of drugs selected for Medicare negotiation?

**Question 46.** Would you oppose policy changes that would remove cancer drug Pomalyst from the list of drugs selected for Medicare negotiation?

**Response 338-345: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. I appreciate that prescription drugs play an important role in meeting many American's health care needs. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 47.** You have spent a large portion of your career expressing concerns about the corrupting influence of the pharmaceutical industry over government. If confirmed as Secretary, you will oversee the Medicare drug price negotiation program. This program has a significant impact on pharmaceutical industry profits and has been the subject of intense lobbying. What steps will you take as Secretary to ensure the pharmaceutical industry does not have undue influence over administrative policy changes to the negotiation program?

**Response: I intend to remove the financial conflicts of interest in HHS so that there is an honest, unbiased, science-driven HHS, accountable to the President, to Congress, and to the American people. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 48.** Do you intend to retain the changes made to the Part D risk adjustment method put into place last year?

**Response: I am committed to making sure that people with Medicare have access to the highest quality healthcare. If confirmed as HHS Secretary, I look forward to**

**working on ways to make sure that Medicare provides access to prescription drugs to America's seniors.**

**Question 49.** Wall Street analysts are reporting that contrary to some industry claims, investment in small molecule drugs remains healthy. Do you agree?

**Response: The question does not adequately specify the referenced reports to allow me to agree or disagree. If confirmed as HHS Secretary, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans while maintaining pharmaceutical innovation.**

**Question 50.** Current law established a payment system for Part B drugs that pays physicians more for prescribing the most expensive drugs in a class. Do you think that should be changed?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans**

**Question 51.** What would you do differently in negotiating the second round of drugs compared to the first?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans**

**Question 52.** Has Donald Trump asked you to negotiate the best possible prices for the second round of drugs?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans**

**Question 53.** Manufacturers are challenging the IRA on multiple grounds, including what constitutes a qualifying single source drug. Do you believe that drugs like Ozempic and Rybelsus, two different formulations of semaglutide made by the same manufacturer, should be considered the same or different drugs for purposes of negotiation?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 54.** In your role as HHS secretary, you would oversee the implementation of the first round of negotiated prices. What will you do if pharmacies are not given access to these prices by manufacturers?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans**

**Question 55.** During your confirmation hearing, you mentioned you have spoken to President Trump about prescription drug prices.

Question a. Have you discussed Medicare drug price negotiation with President Trump?

Question b. Do you believe President Trump supports Medicare drug price negotiation?

Question c. Do you believe President Trump would allow you to make changes to the Medicare drug price negotiation program that would increase drug costs for seniors?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 56.** In your op-ed in the Wall Street Journal on September 5, 2024, you said “Today in Germany, Ozempic costs less than a tenth of what it does in the U.S. because while Berlin negotiates prices on behalf of all Germans, Washington can’t do the same.” In fact, Washington is now able to negotiate drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries, but is not able to negotiate them for commercial payers. Would you support the federal government negotiating drug prices for more Americans than just Medicare beneficiaries?

**Response: President Trump and I are in favor of finding ways to lower drug prices.**

**Question 57.** In your op-ed in the Wall Street Journal on September 5, 2024, you said “Legislators should cap drug prices so that companies can’t charge Americans substantially more than Europeans pay.” Are you still in favor of international reference pricing?

**Response: President Trump and I are in favor of finding ways to lower drug prices.**

**Question 58.** Has Donald Trump suggested to you that he is considering reviving his International Pricing Index/Most Favored Nation model?

**Response: Answered in 356.**

**Question 59.** Has Donald Trump asked for your input or advice about whether to revive his International Pricing Index/Most Favored Nation model?

**Response: Answered in 356.**

**Question 60.** Last fall, you wrote in an op-ed, “legislators should cap drug prices so that companies can’t charge Americans substantially more than Europeans pay.” Do you stand by this statement, that the United States shouldn’t pay more than other high-income countries for prescription drugs?

**Response: Answered in 356.**

**Question 61.** As Secretary of HHS, what policies would you enact or legislation would you support to bring U.S. drug prices down to European levels?

**Question 62.** Would you seek to revive or pursue an updated version of Donald Trump’s International Pricing Index/Most Favored Nation model?

**Question 63.** During your confirmation hearing, when asked about the significant disparity between what Americans and Europeans pay for prescription drugs, you said: “We should end that disparity.” Please describe how you would end disparities between drug prices in the United States and European countries.

**Question 64.** On July 25, 2019, Republican Finance Committee members including Senators Crapo, Cornyn, Cassidy, Thune, Scott, Lankford, Daines, and Young voted in favor of an amendment during a Committee markup that would have prohibited Donald Trump’s administration from implementing his International Pricing Index/Most Favored Nation model with respect to most Medicare Part B drugs. Do you agree that most Part B drugs should be exempt from Trump Administration policies intending to bring prescription drug prices in the United States more in line with European prices?

**Response 360-363: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I plan to follow the law in implementing CMS programs and I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 65.** What are your views on the 340B program?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to understand its priorities with respect to the 340B Drug Pricing program. I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 66.** Children’s hospitals face significant challenges due to drug and supply shortages because pediatric drugs and supplies are often uniquely formulated to accommodate the specific needs of children. When shortages occur, pediatric patients are

disproportionately affected, leading to delayed or canceled procedures, abrupt changes in care settings, and additional burdens on patients and families. What are your plans to ensure uninterrupted access to essential medications and supplies for pediatric patients?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working to reduce drug shortages and keeping patients healthy.**

**Question 67.** In addition to Big Pharma, prescription drug middlemen — pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), group purchasing organizations (GPOs), and wholesale drug distributors — drive up costs, squeeze independent pharmacies out of business, and guarantee constant shortages of life-saving drugs and other medical supplies. Do you agree with Donald Trump that these middlemen are a problem? If confirmed, do you commit to working toward solutions that limit these middlemen healthcare companies' abuses of power?

**Response: If confirmed as HHS Secretary, I commit to using the full scope of HHS authorities to find solutions that lower Americans' healthcare costs while improving healthcare outcomes, consistent with the President's direction to Make America Healthy Again.**

**Question 68.** Congressional leaders have committed to passing robust PBM reforms, including requiring reasonable and relevant contracting between PBMs and pharmacies and banning spread pricing in Medicaid managed care programs. If enacted, would you implement these laws as quickly and faithfully as possible?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing, including the role of middlemen, is an issue of great concern to many Americans. I am interested in working with Congress and with stakeholders to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 69.** You have expressed concerns about pharmaceutical direct to consumer (DTC) advertisements. Please describe what policy solutions you would consider to address these concerns.

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 70.** The first Trump Administration pursued a policy that would require pharmaceutical companies to include list prices in DTC advertisements. This policy was ultimately struck down in court. Do you support this policy? What changes to this policy would you consider to ensure it could withstand legal challenges?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. If confirmed, I look forward to working to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans**

**Question 71.** Do you believe the pharmaceutical industry has excessive influence over cable news due to the money they spend on advertising?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 72.** Do you believe ivermectin is a potential treatment for cancer?

**Response: I think any potential treatment for cancer should be investigated.**

**Question 73.** Do you believe certain medical providers are inappropriately withholding ivermectin as a cancer treatment?

**Response: I believe doctors should be able to prescribe FDA approved drugs pursuant to their medical judgment.**

**Question 74.** You have previously said: “The most profitable thing in our country today is a sick child.” Do you believe the pharmaceutical industry profits off of sick children?

**Response: I am focused on Making America Healthy Again by addressing the root causes of chronic disease and improving the health of our children.**

**Question 75.** Do you believe the pharmaceutical industry is partially to blame for the chronic disease epidemic in the United States?

**Response: I am focused on Making America Healthy Again by addressing the root causes of chronic disease and improving the health of our children.**

**Question 76.** Do you believe funding from the pharmaceutical industry influenced Advancing American Freedom’s position on your nomination?

**Response: I don’t know.**

**Question 77.** During your confirmation hearing, you said: “Pharmaceutical drugs are the third leading cause of death after heart attack and cancer.”

Question a. Do you stand by this statement? **Response: Yes**

Question b. As Secretary, what would you do to address this? **Response: Analyze causation and address.**

*Public Health*

**Question 78.** Do you commit to continuing the CDC's work to make sure we reduce and eliminate the number of children killed by firearms?

**Response: If confirmed, I intend to support efforts at HHS that address the broader behavioral health and substance abuse epidemic at its source.**

**Question 79.** Do you believe that firearm violence is a public health crisis?

**Response: No.**

**Question 80.** Do you believe HHS should support research into firearm violence and firearm injury prevention?

**Response: I believe HHS can explore solutions for the behavioral health and substance abuse epidemic without compromising sacred rights and freedoms.**

**Question 81.** According to provisional data from the CDC, in 2023 the rate of suicide by firearm increased to its highest level ever, with more than 27,000 people taking their own lives. What role should HHS play in reducing gun suicides?

**Response: Suicide is an unfortunate and tragic result of our enduring behavioral health and substance abuse problem. I look forward to working with this Committee to find solutions to this tragedy.**

**Question 82.** If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the CDC continues to publish these statistics related to firearm deaths in a timely manner?

**Response: I support transparency and the need for honest, unbiased information sharing.**

**Question 83.** How do you view your role as Secretary in addressing this gun violence crisis nationwide and for underserved and under-resourced communities?

**Response: If confirmed as Secretary, my objective will be to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the American public. As such, I will work to address underlying behavioral health and substance abuse issues.**

In the United States, malaria cases require ongoing surveillance as we have seen a resurgence of malaria due to deteriorating health care systems. Further, our servicemembers, diplomatic personnel, and their families face direct health threats when deployed to malaria-prone regions. Recently, Secretary of State Marco Rubio highlighted that combating malaria not only saves lives but pays extraordinary dividends. In fact, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) has reduced cases and deaths worldwide, prevented outbreaks, and supported fragile health care systems, which has saved American lives.

**Question 84.** How will you work with Secretary Rubio to maintain the United States' position as a global leader in combating malaria?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to prioritizing America first policies to ensure that American patients are well-served. I look forward to evaluating all existing programs through that lens.**

**Question 85.** Will you commit to ensuring that the PMI's work continues?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to prioritizing America first policies to ensure that American patients are well-served. I look forward to evaluating all existing programs through that lens.**

**Question 86.** As HHS Secretary would you support and expand access to the overdose reversal drug naloxone?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with patients, health care leaders, and communities to end the fentanyl crisis, including by understanding and working to address current gaps in access to naloxone.**

**Question 87.** Will you ensure that people living with Long COVID receive any needed treatment for their illness?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working to ensure that health care decisions are between a doctor and patient. I will follow the law and listen to patients to understand their perspective on the health care system.**

**Question 88.** Given the uptick in diet-related diseases that increase health care costs, how would you scale Food is Medicine programs to tackle these public health challenges?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to evaluating all programs at HHS to Make America Healthy Again.**

**Question 89.** Funding for the Community Health Center Fund has been periodically reauthorized at different levels and for different periods of time. Do you support increasing the current level of \$4 billion?

**Response: Congress sets funding levels for the Community Health Center Fund. As I have previously mentioned, I look forward to evaluating all health programs to ensure that every dollar is supporting patients and Making America Healthy Again.**

**Question 90.** Should federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) provide vaccines to their patients?

**Response: If confirmed, I will follow the law, which clearly states that FQHCs must adhere to the requirements of Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act.**

**Question 91.** What services would you add or cut to what FQHCs already provide?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to following the law and ensure that FQHCs continue to drive the best outcomes for patients.**

**Question 92.** You have mentioned focusing on chronic disease. Tooth decay remains the most prevalent chronic disease in both children and adults, even though it is largely preventable. Studies show that fluoride in community water systems prevents at least 25 percent of tooth decay in children and adults, yet you advocate to remove fluoride from public water. What is your plan to address tooth decay and protect children's dental health?

**Response: If confirmed, I will continue to support high-integrity research to end the chronic disease crisis.**

**Question 93.** Should there be a ban on fluoride in water?

**Response: If confirmed I will look at the data regarding fluoride in water.**

**Question 94.** The HHS Secretary has a crucial role in communicating necessary public health information to the American people. This includes information on the safety, efficacy, and availability of health care procedures, medications, immunizations, and more. As Secretary, what would you do to uphold this role, accurately communicating the findings of scientific experts and researchers employed by HHS, especially in the face of broad mis- and dis-information campaigns that currently proliferate?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to elevating communications from transparent researchers and scientific experts who hold themselves accountable to the American people, whose research has been replicated and subjected to peer review.**

## **Climate**

**Question 95.** As Secretary, what actions would you take to help fortify the vulnerable child care and early learning sector and long-term care facilities against the threat of climate change, and ensure that child-serving programs and long-term care facilities can continue to meet the needs of children, seniors and families?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with the leadership of the Administration for Children and Families to work to strengthen child care programs and improve outcomes for children.**

**Question 96.** Do you plan to continue existing efforts within HHS that focus on protecting Americans and American institutions from the impact of climate change?

**Response: If confirmed, I will ensure HHS follows the directives of the President on climate change policies.**

**Question 97.** Do you plan to continue the existing work being done in the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity?

**Response: The President issued an executive order on this issue.**

**Question 98.** What additional steps will you take to expand on the ability of HHS to respond to the public health impacts of climate change?

**Response: I defer to the Departments with relevant programs in their jurisdiction.**

### ***Competition & Consolidation***

**Question 99.** Last year, HHS, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Trade Commission launched an initiative to promote competition in healthcare markets and address corporate consolidation. Do you support maintaining this tri-agency initiative and continuing work to address uncompetitive practices in the healthcare industry?

**Response: If confirmed I look forward to working with Congress and other agencies across the Administration to understand how we can best ensure high quality care, promote competition, and provide health care at a good price for American patients.**

**Question 100.** Many agencies have prioritized hearing from the public about the ongoing health care consolidation crisis. This includes the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) open commission meetings, the Department of Commerce's listening sessions, and HHS's public inquiry — launched with the FTC and Department of Justice — focused on increasing corporate ownership in health care. If confirmed, will you continue this work and make sure it remains public?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and regulatory agencies to ensure that patients have greater transparency in all aspects of healthcare.**

**Question 101.** What efforts will you pursue to enhance market competition and limit future consolidation in health care?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and regulatory agencies to ensure that patients have access to quality health care.**

**Question 102.** What additional steps would you take to address the negative impacts on patients of growing corporate ownership in health care?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and regulatory agencies to ensure that patients have access to quality health care.**

**Question 103.** Big Pharma abuses government-backed patents covering brand-name drugs to keep prices high and block more affordable generic competition. If confirmed, would you direct the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue regulations aimed at preventing such patent abuse, specifically by prohibiting junk patent listings; pursuing enforcement action against brand-name drug manufacturers that have listed junk patents in the FDA's official registry, known as the Orange Book; and updating the approval process for generic drugs to curtail product hopping, a form of patent abuse?

**Response: I agree that we should look for ways to promote prescription drug competition to bring down drug costs for the American public.**

**Question 104.** What is your opinion on the growing private equity investment in nursing homes?

**Response: If confirmed, I am committed to working to make sure that Americans have access to high-quality nursing home care with radical transparency so that Americans and their families have the information they need to receive quality care.**

**Question 105.** Would you support restrictions on private equity investment in, and/or ownership of, nursing homes?

**Response: If confirmed I look forward to working with Congress to understand how we can best ensure high quality care and good prices for American patients.**

**Question 106.** Extensive research shows that decades of health care consolidation and privatization are responsible for out-of-control costs and declining care quality. Do you agree? If yes, how do you propose to address the problems of consolidation and privatization? If not, to what do you attribute the U.S. healthcare system's out-of-control costs and declining care quality?

**Response: If confirmed I look forward to working with Congress to understand how we can best ensure high quality care and good prices for American patients.**

**Question 107.** Do you agree that conflicts of interests within vertically integrated healthcare monopolies are driving up costs? If so, how would you use HHS authority to pursue structural changes to the healthcare market?

**Response: If confirmed I look forward to working with Congress and the FTC to evaluate and address market consolidation issues, and ensure high quality care and good prices for American patients.**

**Question 108.** What is your view on the increasing role of private equity in our health care system, and what should be the role of HHS in regulating private equity investments in health care?

**Response: If confirmed I look forward to working with Congress to understand how best to ensure high quality care and good prices for American patients.**

### ***Regulatory Politicization***

**Question 109.** How would Donald Trump's Schedule F executive order impact the regulation of medicines and vaccines?

**Response: It would not.**

**Question 110.** What process will you use to ensure that regulatory changes do not jeopardize public safety or access to federal health programs?

**Response: Public notice and comment to inform agency decision making where necessary and legally required helps ensure public safety and health care access by inviting input from stakeholders. I intend to follow all applicable laws.**

### ***Reproductive Rights***

**Question 111.** Donald Trump said: "I HAVE NEVER, AND WILL NEVER ADVOCATE IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS ON BIRTH CONTROL or other contraceptives." This aligns with the vast majority of Americans who support access to birth control. How will you use your role to support this position and ensure access to birth control?

**Response: I will follow the law regarding access to birth control.**

**Question 112.** Donald Trump has said many times that abortion should be left to the states. Will you commit to not using HHS to restrict peoples' access to reproductive health care at the federal level, including abortion medication?

**Response: I support President Trump's position that the States should have the power to determine their own laws on abortion.**

**Question 113.** Earlier this year, you said in an interview that you would support abortion even at full term. Do you still hold this belief?

**Response: Every abortion is a tragedy. I support President Trump's position that the States should have the power to determine their own laws on abortion.**

**Question 114.** Do you believe that everyone should have access to the health care their doctor recommends for them?

**Response: Patients and doctors should be free to make health care decisions, within the bounds of the law. Patients also should have full informed consent, which includes consultation about all available options so patients can make their own health decisions.**

**Question 115.** Do you believe the government should be able to interfere with or overrule decisions made between doctors and patients?

**Response: Patients and doctors should be free to make health care decisions, within the bounds of the law. Patients also should have full informed consent, which includes consultation about all available options so patients can make their own health decisions.**

**Question 116.** Do you believe that people should be able to freely move across state lines to access reproductive health care?

**Response: I support President Trump's position that the States should have the power to determine their own laws on abortion.**

**Question 117.** Do you think that contraception, including methods such as emergency contraception and IUDs, is basic primary health care?

**Response: I will follow the law regarding access to contraception.**

***Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA)***

**Question 118.** Will you commit to ensuring that patients at hospital emergency departments have access to emergency life and health-saving care when they need it, including emergency reproductive health care?

**Response: I will follow the law on EMTALA.**

**Question 119.** Do you think that a person who is experiencing severe pregnancy complications should be able to receive emergency care to save their life, even if that care is an abortion?

**Response: I support President Trump's position that the States should have the power to determine their own laws on abortion. These state laws include exceptions to allow abortion if the life of the mother is in danger.**

**Question 120.** Do you think that the ability to provide quality emergency care for pregnant people is essential in preventing maternal mortality?

**Response: HHS supports providing quality emergency care for pregnant women.**

### *Medication Abortion*

**Question 121.** Access to safe, effective medication abortion care is essential to ensuring people have the freedom to make personal decisions about their health and futures. In your role as HHS Secretary, how would you protect access to medication abortion care?

**Response:**

**We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the confirmation hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

**Question 122.** Will you oppose politically-motivated actions that go against evidence-based medicine to restrict access to abortion for millions through efforts to remove mifepristone from the market or roll back its current protocol for prescribing and dispensing?

**Response:**

**We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the confirmation hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

**Question 123.** You have previously stated that you support the FDA's approval of the abortion medication mifepristone. Is this still the case?

**Response:**

**We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the confirmation hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

**Question 124.** What is your interpretation of the existing scientific and medical research on mifepristone?

**Response:**

**We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the confirmation hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

**Question 125.** Do you agree with the three in five Americans who believe that patients should have access to abortion medication via telehealth and mail?

**Response:**

**We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the confirmation hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

## ***Family Planning***

**Question 126.** What are your views on the Title X program?

**Response: As HHS Secretary I will faithfully administer the laws and funds made available by Congress to carry out the Title X family planning program.**

Question 127. In the context of vaccines, you have expressed a strong belief that patients should have access to full information on which to base their medical decisions. Do you believe that patients have a right to full information from their doctors in the context of sexual and reproductive health care?

**Response: I will follow President Trump's Executive Order as it relates to sexual and reproductive care.**

**Question 128.** Do you commit to protecting pregnant patients' ability to receive full information from their doctors by pledging not to reinstate a gag rule in the Title X program?

**Response: I will follow the laws governing the Title X program and the President's Executive Order on Enforcing the Hyde Amendment.**

**Question 129.** Do you commit to following medical and scientific evidence in the Title X program, including not prioritizing natural family planning above other contraceptive methods?

**Response: I will follow the laws governing the Title X program.**

**Question 130.** The first Trump administration issued a rule to govern the Title X program that decimated the provider network and reduced the number of patients the program served from 4 million to just 1.5 million. That rule was reversed, and the program has been building back. In 2023, Title X provided care to 80% more patients than in 2020. Will you issue a rule with provisions that undermine the Title X network and the quality of care like the first Trump administration, or will you commit to not?

**Response: I will follow the laws governing the Title X program and implement the President's Executive Order on Enforcing the Hyde Amendment.**

**Question 131.** Can you pledge to ensure that Americans will continue receiving family planning services and counseling consistent with evidence-based standards and without censorship?

**Response: I will follow the laws governing the Title X program and implement the President's Executive Order on Enforcing the Hyde Amendment.**

**Question 132.** Will you ensure that people who use Medicaid can access care from the qualified family planning providers of their choice, such as Planned Parenthood?

**Response: I will follow the law regarding Planned Parenthood's participation in the Medicaid program.**

**Question 133.** What is your understanding of the services provided by Planned Parenthood?

**Response: I am aware of the services provided by Planned Parenthood.**

**Question 134.** Do you support funding for Planned Parenthood?

**Response: I will follow the law and President Trump's policies regarding funding for Planned Parenthood.**

**Question 135.** How will you continue and build on previous work to protect access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care and address the shortage of reproductive health care providers?

**Response: I will administer programs to strengthen the health care workforce, subject to appropriations from Congress. I will also follow President Trump's Executive Order on Enforcing the Hyde Amendment, to protect taxpayers from funding or promoting abortion.**

**Question 136.** How do you plan to ensure our health care workforce has the tools and resources they need to address the growing needs of their communities, including around contraceptive access and reproductive health care?

**Response: I will administer programs to strengthen the health care workforce, subject to appropriations from Congress. I will also follow President Trump's Executive Order on Enforcing the Hyde Amendment, to protect taxpayers from funding or promoting abortion.**

### *Research*

**Question 137.** What, in your view, are the most critical areas of research needed to improve the delivery of health care in the United States?

**Response: I am committed to Making Americans Healthy Again.**

**Question 138.** How can federal research initiatives be directed to address disparities in access, quality, and outcomes, and what role do you see for emerging technologies and data-driven approaches in achieving these goals?

**Response: The United States must maintain our leadership in the fields of emerging technologies and data science. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to further leverage our leadership in these fields to answer tough questions and deliver results for the American people.**

**Question 139.** How do you plan to prioritize the inclusion of a diverse perspective of researchers and robust evidence in the generation and implementation of patient-centered outcomes research?

**Response: If confirmed, my goal is for the U.S. to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent health research accountable to the American people.**

**Question 140.** How would you ensure that research addresses the needs of underserved populations and that its findings are effectively integrated into clinical practice to improve health outcomes?

**Response: If confirmed, my goal is for the U.S. to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent health research accountable to the American people.**

**Question 141.** Would you commit to maintaining rigorous data collection efforts as they relate to public health, including sexual and reproductive health, even if they come under attack from the Department on Government Efficiency (DOGE) and other forces—understanding that this research is critical for understanding rates of sexually transmitted infections, maternal health disparities, patterns in contraceptive use and more?

**Response: If confirmed, my goal is for the U.S. to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent health research accountable to the American people.**

**Question 142.** If confirmed as HHS Secretary, would you cut funding for research institutions?

**Response: If confirmed, my goal is for the U.S. to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent health research accountable to the American people.**

**Question 143.** If confirmed, will you commit to supporting increased funding for nutrition research at NIH without cutting other research streams for infectious disease?

**Response: If confirmed, my goal is for the U.S. to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent health research accountable to the American people.**

**Question 144.** Do you agree that sustained investment in cancer research and prevention funding is important to beating cancer in the U.S.?

**Response: If confirmed, my goal is for the U.S. to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent health research accountable to the American people.**

**Question 145.** Will you commit to supporting increased funding levels for cancer research and prevention?

**Response: If confirmed, my goal is for the U.S. to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent health research accountable to the American people.**

**Question 146.** What specific steps do you believe are necessary to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in advancing evidence-based health care?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with AHRQ to hear their proposals on how they will make Americans healthy again.**

**Question 147.** Are there any legislative, regulatory, organizational, or funding changes you would recommend to support AHRQ's mission and improve its impact on health care quality, patient safety, and system efficiency?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to understand how best AHRQ can support the mission to make Americans healthy again.**

**Question 148.** The NIH recently had all funding frozen and was instructed to stop all activity including meetings of groups of professionals that support their work. All travel was also discontinued. These actions effectively halted the function of the NIH, putting at risk vital research including, but not limited to cancer research. Will you commit to immediately restore full funding and function to the National Institutes of Health? If not, why not?

**Response: OMB rescinded Memo 25-13 on January 29, 2025. HHS will continue to implement the President's Executive Orders.**

### *Science*

**Question 149.** You advocate for medical practices that blatantly contradict scientific consensus and spread life threatening misinformation. Will you commit to decision-making based on credible, peer-reviewed research, and acknowledge the danger of promoting unfounded theories?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 150.** Will you commit to working with scientists, medical-field professionals, and public health experts should you be confirmed to Secretary?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 151.** Will you ensure that health policies are based on sound evidence rather than political motivation?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 152.** Will you commit to upholding the scientific integrity of HHS agencies, including the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which produce and rely on public health research and data collection?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to advancing reforms which will restore scientific integrity to the work of the NIH and the CDC.**

**Question 452:** It is in the strategic interest of the United States to lead global vaccination efforts to ensure the health and safety of Americans in the United States and abroad, and to prevent the

global spread of diseases. Do you agree, yes or no? Will you commit to upholding the United States' commitments in ensuring access to needed vaccines globally?

**Response: If confirmed, I will evaluate all programs to ensure that they advocate for Americans first.**

**Question 453:** Will you commit to using the best available scientific evidence to inform policy decisions, and to clearly communicate the scientific basis for these decisions to the public?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 454:** Will you commit to ensuring transparency and accountability in the selection and interpretation of scientific evidence used for policy making?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 153.** Will you commit to ensuring that scientific integrity is upheld throughout your agency, including in research conduct, management, data interpretation, and communication of findings?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 154.** Will you commit to ensuring that scientists at your agency have the necessary resources and autonomy to conduct their work in accordance with these principles, free from undue influence or pressure to produce specific outcomes?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 155.** Will you commit to ensuring that all research disseminated by your agency undergoes rigorous review for accuracy and that the scientists involved have the opportunity to review and correct any misrepresentations of their work before public release?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 156.** Will you commit to putting your personal beliefs aside and making decisions based on credible, peer-reviewed science as Secretary of HHS?

**Response: I will review all data and make it transparent to Americans, so they are informed.**

**Question 157.** Will you commit to ensuring that your agency will provide public access to federal funded research, as directed in the 2022 memorandum from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy?

**Response: Yes.**

### *Samoa*

**Question 158.** In Samoa, your words were directly linked to a measles outbreak that claimed the lives of 83 people, mostly young children. How do you reconcile your personal

crusades with the immense pain and suffering they have inflicted on families and the irreparable harm they've caused to public health worldwide?

**Response: My words had nothing to do with vaccine uptake in Samoa or with the 2019 epidemic.**

**Question 159.** Did you meet with Edwin Tamasese and Taylor Winterstein, as well as Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, during your 2019 trip?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 160.** Do you believe that the MMR vaccine caused the deaths of 83 people in Samoa in 2019?

**Response: I have asked for an investigation of allegations that an experimental measles vaccine imported from India and then improperly administered may have caused the deaths.**

**Question 161.** Following the 2019 Samoan measles outbreak, a compulsory mass vaccination campaign brought vaccination rates back up to 95% and the government introduced a new law in December 2019 requiring all children to be fully immunized before starting primary school. Given your view that no vaccine is safe and effective, Do you agree with this solution to ending the spread of measles in Samoa?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines.**

**Question 162.** Do you believe you hold any responsibility for the measles outbreak in Samoa?

**Response: No**

### ***Tobacco***

**Question 163.** Currently, there is no federal excise tax nor manufacturer user fee on e-cigarettes. Should there be one?

**Response: Congress sets federal tax policy and the Internal Revenue Service is responsible for collecting taxes. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more from the FDA on their work as it relates to e-cigarettes.**

**Question 164.** Do you believe that flavored nicotine products, especially flavored e-cigarettes, attract children to use these products?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more from the FDA on this issue.**

**Question 165.** Should flavored e-cigarettes continue to be available for sale in the U.S.?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more from the FDA on this issue.**

**Question 166.** How will you ensure that the FDA will continue to use the best scientific evidence to keep addictive and deadly products off the market?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring scientific integrity at all HHS sub-agencies.**

### *Vaccines*

**Question 167.** The IRA made vaccines available to seniors under Medicare Parts B and D without cost-sharing. What changes would you make to this policy?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking the vaccine.**

**Question 168.** The Inflation Reduction Act provided a mechanism to protect Medicare beneficiaries from vaccine-preventable diseases by requiring Medicare drug plans to make vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) free for enrollees. Do you support this coverage?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking the vaccines.**

**Question 169.** You've repeatedly said you prioritize safety for children. If that's true, why do you continue to spread misinformation that undermines trust in vaccines, a critical tool for protecting children's health?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I will restore and protect children's health. If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines.**

**Question 170.** What is your strategy to protect young children from the illnesses and deaths that infectious diseases cause?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I will restore and protect children's health.**

**Question 171.** Do you commit to maintaining coverage without cost-sharing for all vaccines currently recommended by CDC?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 172.** Should ACIP recommend vaccines?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 173.** Will you seek to replace current ACIP committee members?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 174.** Will you seek to expand ACIP?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 175.** What criteria do you believe should be used to select ACIP members?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 176.** If confirmed, would you ever direct ACIP members to resign before the end of their term, so you could pick their replacements?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 177.** As HHS Secretary, would you ever direct the CDC Director to unilaterally reject ACIP recommendations?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 178.** Will you commit to supporting the CDC Director's independent judgement in all ACIP decisions?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 179.** Will you take steps, or encourage others to take steps, to revoke FDA licensure of essential vaccines, such as the polio vaccine or the hepatitis B vaccine?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 180.** Some vaccine skeptics have called for a pause of the production of certain vaccines, including whooping cough, so the FDA can conduct further research. Do you support pausing production of these vaccines which have been proven safe and effective?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.**

**Question 181.** Do you acknowledge that discouraging the American people from getting vaccinated increases the risk of disease outbreaks that could seriously harm vulnerable Americans?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I support transparency and sound data for vaccines.**

**Question 182.** Do you plan to continue the bipartisan work of past HHS Secretaries to proactively encourage the American people to get vaccinated?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I support transparency and sound data for vaccines. I am pro-safety. If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines**

**Question 183.** You've suggested conducting double-blind, placebo-controlled studies to assess vaccine safety and effectiveness. While that may be appropriate for testing vaccines against diseases that do not have an effective vaccine or treatment available, that is not the accepted practice for diseases that already have an approved vaccine. Such studies would involve withholding existing vaccines from children, potentially causing children to become severely ill or even die. Do you agree that placebo-controlled studies would raise serious ethical concerns under these circumstances?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 184.** Would you have any personal concerns about any clinical trial design that could lead to the preventable death of a child if an existing vaccine were withheld?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 185.** Would you agree with scientists if they presented evidence to you demonstrating that such clinical trial designs would put the health of participants at risk?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 186.** Yes or no, do you believe vaccines cause autism?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I support transparency and sound data for vaccines.**

**Question 187.** Will you commit to supporting and upholding the childhood immunization schedule, which is regularly reviewed by independent experts based on ongoing research into their effectiveness and safety?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I support transparency and sound data for vaccines.**

**Question 188.** You have stated that you don't plan to take away vaccines, but want to improve vaccine safety and reduce liability protection for vaccine manufacturers. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) was created to ensure that individuals harmed by a vaccine are provided fair and efficient compensation and to ensure a stable vaccine supply. What changes are you considering to the VICP?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I support transparency and sound data for vaccines.**

**Question 189.** What impact do you anticipate changes to VICP would have on patient access to vaccines?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 190.** Do you commit to allowing the Government Accountability Office to evaluate the impact of any potential changes to the VICP on vaccine access and patient health prior to implementation?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 191.** Will you commit to preserving the independence of federal vaccine research, and commit to not cutting funding for vaccine research?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 192.** Will you commit to not forcing out career scientists and civil servants who do not share your views on vaccines?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 193.** What vaccines do you think are safe and effective?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 194.** What evidence do you need to see in order to determine that a vaccine is safe and effective?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 195.** If confirmed, do you commit to continuing the CDC's Child and Adolescent Vaccination Schedule?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 196.** You have said, “I see somebody on a hiking trail carrying a little baby and I say to him, ‘Better not get him vaccinated.’ And he heard that from me. If he hears it from ten other people, maybe he won’t do it, you know, maybe he will save that child.” You have also been quoted stating that all your children have been vaccinated. As HHS Secretary, would you be telling parents not to vaccinate their children, unlike the care your own children received?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines. As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 197.** Do you believe we should provide a vaccine to protect children against diphtheria?

**Response: There are approved vaccines for diphtheria and parents should consult their child’s physician for advice.**

**Question 198.** Yes or no, do you believe the vaccine for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) is safe and effective?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 199.** Yes or no, do you believe the shingles vaccine is safe and effective?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety..**

**Question 200.** Yes or no, do you believe the vaccines for diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis are safe and effective?

**Response: I am pro-safety.**

**Question 201.** Yes or no, do you believe the vaccine against haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) is safe and effective?

**Response: I am pro-safety.**

**Question 202.** The Vaccines for Children program provides immunization for children aged 18 and under who are eligible for Medicaid, are Native American or Native Alaskan, are

uninsured or are underinsured. The program has been extremely successful in making sure that all children can get the same care, regardless of where they live or whether they have wealthy parents. In fact, in 2023 alone, VFC distributed over 74 million vaccines to participating health care providers to administer to their patients. Do you agree that this program is essential in our nation's efforts to keep the most vulnerable children safe from harmful, preventable infectious diseases? If confirmed, do you commit to working with Congress to ensure that this program receives proper funding?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to better understand and evaluate this program.**

**Question 203.** Studies have demonstrated the efficacy of the HPV vaccine in protecting young people. Will you commit to ensure continued access to this vaccine?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 204.** What is your response to the potentially detrimental economic impact that the downward trend in immunization rates may have on our nation?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 205.** Policy intended to roll back efforts to improve access to vaccination will result in increased emergency room visits and hospitalization of children. With an existing shortage of pediatricians, what are your plans to ensure infrastructure is in place to care for the increased number of children who will require medical care?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 206.** Ninety percent of children who have been hospitalized for influenza are unvaccinated. Why do you think this is?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 207.** Measles is an extremely contagious virus, and serious cases can cause deafness, encephalitis (brain infection) and pneumonia. How are you going to ensure that the

country will maintain its herd immunity high enough for measles to prevent it from recurring?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 208.** Would you seek the withdrawal of any drug or vaccine currently on the market?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 209.** In your work with the Children’s Health Defense and other projects, you have collaborated with Dr. Andrew Wakefield, who fraudulently and incorrectly claimed a connection between vaccines and autism. Since his article was published in 1998, it was determined that Dr. Wakefield manipulated data, had undisclosed conflicts of interest, and committed numerous ethical violations. Dr. Wakefield lost his medical license in 2010. What is your relationship with Dr. Wakefield today?

**Response: He is an acquaintance.**

**Question 210.** If you do not believe in the standard scientific method to determine standards in medicine, what standards or types of evidence do you believe in?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry.**

**Question 211.** In 2017, your organization pushed false claims about African Americans supposedly being “particularly vulnerable to vaccine injuries including autism.” Yes or no, do you still believe this?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry. My positions will naturally evolve in response to such efforts.**

**Question 212.** In 2020, you claimed without evidence that “People with African blood react differently to vaccines than people with White blood. They’re much more sensitive.” Yes or no, do you still believe this?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry. My positions will naturally evolve in response to such efforts.**

**Question 213.** What specific actions would you take to support and scale up critical immunization efforts across federal agencies such as the FDA and the CDC?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 214.** What specific actions would you take to ensure that all aspects – including funding for states and community-based organizations - of crucial public health immunization programs like the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program are protected?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to better understand and evaluate this program.**

**Question 215.** FDA- approved vaccines in the U.S. undergo a rigorous independent scientific process before they are approved for use. However, you have mentioned concerns about the safety of approved vaccines. What about the current vaccine approval process do you find concerning?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 216.** What specific steps in the vaccine approval process would you change if confirmed?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 217.** What additional research and data would you require manufacturers to provide in order to ensure that vaccines are safe for use?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 218.** In May 2021, you petitioned the FDA, demanding the agency revoke Emergency Use Authorization for existing COVID-19 vaccines and refrain from approving and licensing them. If you were serving as Secretary of Health and Human Services at the time, would you have revoked authorization for COVID-19 vaccines?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry. I cannot answer a counterfactual**

**question when I do not have the benefit of complete information that would only have been available to the HHS Secretary in 2021.**

**Question 219.** In that same petition, you suggested that instead of vaccines, COVID could be addressed with ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine, which had already been deemed ineffective against the virus. Do you stand by your position that ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine should be used to treat COVID instead of vaccines?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry.**

### *Polio*

**Question 220.** In 2022, your lawyer, Aaron Siri, filed a petition with HHS and the FDA, seeking to withdraw approval for the Polio vaccine. Did you ever speak with Mr. Siri about the polio vaccine? Did you ever speak with Mr. Siri about this petition?

**Response: No**

**Question 221.** Did you or Mr. Siri receive any compensation from Children's Health Defense or any other entity for this petition?

**Response: No, I did not receive any compensation from anyone.**

**Question 222.** You have questioned whether the polio vaccine has caused more deaths than it has prevented. What sources or information led you to this question?

**Response: As I explained in my testimony, I support the polio vaccine, and for all vaccines, I want to make sure their safety and efficacy is backed up by data.**

**Question 223.** Yes or no, do you believe the polio vaccine is safe and effective?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 224.** Do you believe people should receive the polio vaccine?

**Response: Americans should make their own decisions about their health.**

**Question 225.** If confirmed, would you attempt to restrict access to any form of polio vaccine in the U.S?

**Response: No.**

**Question 226.** What are your views on the efficacy of polio vaccines in preventing disabilities and deaths?

**As I explained in my testimony, I support the polio vaccine, and if confirmed as HHS Secretary, I will do nothing that makes it more difficult to access the vaccine or that discourages people from taking it.**

***HPV***

**Question 227.** Research shows that the HPV vaccine has been an essential tool in combating cervical cancer, with one study showing that the vaccine stops 90 percent of cervical cancer cases. Researchers also found a 62 percent drop in cervical cancer deaths in young women over the last decade due to HPV vaccination. Despite this, you have spent years attacking Gardasil, even alleging that the vaccine “increas[es] the risk of cervical cancer.” What specific evidence did you rely on to inform your views on this?

**Response: Without further citation to this selective and partial quotation, I cannot comment on the basis or context as it relates to this question. As I testified to Senator Crapo, I am neither anti-vaccine nor anti- any industry, including the vaccine industry. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 228.** Do you currently believe the HPV vaccine is safe and effective?

**Response: I am pro-safety.**

**Question 229.** Has Children’s Health Defense ever played a role in any lawsuit against Merck related to Gardasil?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 230.** In one of the Wisner Baum cases targeting Gardasil, *Trevisan v Merck et al*, filed in California in 2022, you were listed as counsel *pro hac vice*. What is your current relationship with the law firm, Wisner Baum, that litigated several of these lawsuits?

**Response: Pursuant to a contract, I refer cases to WisnerBaum in exchange for a fee. Upon confirmation, I will terminate that contract.**

**Question 231.** Did you receive, or do you expect to receive, any compensation from Wisner Baum related to any past, current or future lawsuit against Merck related to Gardasil?

**Response: I have not yet received compensation from WisnerBaum related to any lawsuit against Merck related to Gardasil. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in any such litigation.**

**Question 232.** Have any of your family members ever received, or expect to receive, any compensation from Wisner Baum from any lawsuit against Merck related to Gardasil?

**Response: An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process. It provides that I will divest my interest in any such litigation via an assignment to my non-dependent, adult son.**

**Question 233.** You are still listed as a lead attorney on multidistrict litigation against Merck over the Gardasil HPV vaccine. Do you stand to receive compensation from this ongoing litigation?

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

**Question 234.** As of January 28, 2025, you are listed as the attorney of record on the case numbers from the Gardasil MDL Docket that were not disclosed to the Senate Finance Committee. Do you expect to receive referral fees or other forms of financial compensation related to these cases? Please respond yes or no to each case below.

Question a. Case No. 3:22cv382

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question b. Case No. 3:22cv384

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question c. Case No. 3:22cv386

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question d. Case No. 3:22cv392

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question e. Case No. 3:22cv397

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

**Question 235.** If confirmed, would you recuse yourself from any decisions or directives that could directly impact the outcome of the case or parties to the litigation?

**Response: My Ethics Agreement fully sets forth my recusal obligations, and I will abide by it fully.**

**Question 236.** If confirmed would you recuse yourself from any work related to this and any other lawsuits you are involved in?

**Response: My Ethics Agreement fully sets forth my recusal obligations, and I will abide by it fully.**

**Question 237.** Will such recusals include both official actions from HHS and its agencies concerning Gardasil as well as attempts to influence agency action informally?

**Response: My Ethics Agreement fully sets forth my recusal obligations, and I will abide by it fully. I do not understand there to be any difference, in so far as my recusal obligations are concerned, between formal and informal action.**

**Question 238.** If confirmed as Secretary, you would oversee numerous communications and decisions across HHS that could influence the outcome of ongoing lawsuits related to Gardasil. Do you commit to recuse yourself from all of the following types of decisions and communications related to Gardasil? Please respond yes or no to each individual item below.

Question a. Any public statements from any entity within HHS, including CDC and FDA, related to Gardasil

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question b. ACIP proceedings and decisions related to Gardasil

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question c. The development, revision, and dissemination of vaccine information materials pursuant to the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, including Vaccine Information Statements

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question d. Decisions, recommendations, or evaluations related to Gardasil under the CDC GRADE system

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question e. FDA decisions related to whether to hold hearings or public meetings related to Gardasil

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question f. Decisions related FDA release of safety and effectiveness data and information related to Gardasil under 21 C.F.R. §601.51

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question g. FDA disclosures of information related to Gardasil under 21 C.F.R. Part 20

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question h. FDA disclosures of records related to Gardasil under 21 C.F.R. §20.82

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question i. FDA determinations about data related to Gardasil under 21 C.F.R. §20.28

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question j. FDA decisions about whether to respond to a public request related to Gardasil under 21 C.F.R. §20.47

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

Question k. Decisions related to what constitutes a trade secret or commercial/financial information that is privileged and confidential related to Gardasil under 21 C.F.R. §20.61

**Response: No. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

**Question 239.** FDA has control over the labeling of Gardasil. Will you commit to recuse yourself from any FDA decision-making concerning the Gardasil label while you continue to have a financial interest in the outcome of any Gardasil litigation?

**Response: Yes. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

**Question 240.** The CDC has control over the Vaccine Information Statements for Gardasil. Will you commit to recuse yourself from any CDC decision-making concerning the Gardasil Vaccine Information Statement while you continue to have a financial interest in the outcome of any Gardasil litigation?

**Response: Yes. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

**Question 241.** Gardasil has been widely studied and has been shown to be a safe vaccine. Will you commit to refrain from making any public statements about the safety of Gardasil while you continue to have a financial interest in the outcome of any Gardasil litigation?

**Response: Yes. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

**Question 242.** Gardasil has been widely studied and has been shown to be effective in preventing cervical cancer and other cancers. Will you commit to refrain from making any public statements about the efficacy of Gardasil while you continue to have a financial interest in the outcome of any Gardasil litigation?

**Response: Yes. An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

**Question 243.** Will you commit to recuse yourself from any agency decision-making regarding what Gardasil claims should be compensated in the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program while you continue to have a financial interest in the outcome of any Gardasil litigation?

**Response: My Ethics Agreement provides that I am divesting my interest in WisnerBaum VICP cases, and an amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, which will provide for the divestment of my interest from Gardasil litigation entirely. Therefore, recusal from such decisionmaking is not required.**

**Question 244.** If confirmed as Secretary, do you commit to promoting greater uptake of the HPV vaccine, which has been shown to decrease cervical cancer mortality?

**Response: I will promote uptake of all safe and effective vaccines.**

### ***Hepatitis B***

**Question 245.** Do you believe that the hepatitis B vaccine is necessary in protecting babies and children against a chronic disease that causes cancer?

**Response: I believe the Hepatitis B vaccine protects individuals against Hepatitis B.**

**Question 246.** Do you believe that the hepatitis B vaccine does not work?

**Response: No.**

**Question 247.** Yes or no, do you believe the vaccine against hepatitis A and B is safe and effective?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.**

**Question 248.** Before the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine was recommended in the U.S., 9,000 American babies each year were infected during childbirth. If the recommendation for universal hepatitis B birth dose were removed, how would you recommend we prevent these thousands of babies from becoming infected with hepatitis B each year?

**Response: If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products. That includes ensuring transparency and accountability in federal laws which are intended to protect patients first.**

**Question 249.** Hepatitis B is a chronic disease that leads to liver cancer in 25% of untreated people. With liver cancer being the sixth leading cause of all cancer deaths in the U.S, what are your plans for preventing liver cancer if access to the hepatitis B vaccine is hindered?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, vaccines play a critical role in health care, and I support access to vaccines.**

### *Measles*

As many as 1 out of every 20 children with measles gets pneumonia, the most common cause of death from measles in young children; 1 out of every 1,000 people with measles will develop brain swelling, which could lead to permanent brain damage; 1 to 3 out of 1,000 children with measles will die, even with the best care.

**Question 250.** In light of the recent measles outbreaks here in the U.S. and abroad, are you concerned about the reemergence of this highly infectious disease?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, vaccines play a critical role in health care, and I support the Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule.**

**Question 251.** What will be your strategy to stop the spread of measles?

**Response: As I testified to the Committee, vaccines play a critical role in health care, and I support the Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule.**

### *Workforce*

**Question 252.** The Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education Program (CHGME) is the only federal program solely devoted to the training of pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists. What are your plans for this program?

**Response: If confirmed, I will work with HRSA staff to quickly get up-to-speed on the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education Program. The mission of Graduate Medical Education (GME) of providing medical personnel is critical, including for rural hospitals. I look forward to working with Congress on priorities to improve GME programs, including CHGME.**

**Question 253.** The nation faces a shortage of pediatric specialty providers, such as pediatric advanced practice nurses, pediatric respiratory therapists, and pediatric radiology techs. What are your plans to leverage and enhance existing programs, like the Nurses Corps, the Health Care Opportunity Program, and others to help ensure that the nation has the pediatric providers it needs to care for children?

**Response: We must ensure we have adequate pediatric healthcare providers. If confirmed, I will work with CMS and HRSA staff on leveraging existing health workforce programs. We also need to look at innovations, including AI and telemedicine. If confirmed, I believe it is critical that we look at ways to better address workforce shortages, especially in rural communities.**

**Question 254.** Donald Trump has issued Executive Orders halting federal hiring for career agency staff and proposing other structural changes to the federal workforce. How will you balance staffing reforms with ensuring continuity of operations and the preservation of crucial expertise and institutional knowledge?

**Response: We are committed to upholding the key operations of HHS that keep Americans healthy and cared for. Our Administration continues our commitment to spend taxpayer dollars wisely and efficiently. You have my commitment that any reductions or freeze in staffing will not thwart services to the American public. Mission critical hiring has not been exempted, and we intend to continue to streamline our operations to provide high quality of service and remain responsible stewards of American taxpayer dollars.**

**Question 255.** You have said that you want to clear out entire departments of the federal government, fire hundreds of NIH employees, and previously told FDA workers to “pack [their] bags.” As HHS Secretary, would you still stand by these statements that call for the removal of career staff engaged in scientific decision-making?

**Response: I will work to ensure that our government health agencies are staffed with dedicated employees who honor the scientific process.**

**Question 256.** Do you believe your criticism of the workforce and threats to remove staff will undermine your ability to lead the HHS workforce?

**Response: No. I will follow all applicable employment and labor laws.**

Immigrants make up a critical component of our healthcare workforce, to include serving as physicians, nurses, nursing home workers, home health aides, support staff, and more. Immigrants often work in underserved areas that struggle to recruit and retain healthcare workers, and immigrants support quality healthcare access for rural Americans and our veterans.

**Question 257.** Do you agree that immigrants play an essential role in securing our healthcare workforce, yes or no?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 258.** Do you agree that it is in the United States’ strategic interests to maintain and strengthen the critical immigrant healthcare workforce pipeline, yes or no?

**Response: If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the pipeline of qualified medical professionals to serve patients.**

**Question 259.** Do you agree that immigrant healthcare workers should be fairly compensated for their contributions, yes or no?

**Response: I certainly believe workers should be compensated for their services, but I would defer any enforcement of relevant federal law with regards to this matter to the Department of Labor.**

### *Leadership*

**Question 260.** How can you credibly lead agencies you have repeatedly attacked as corrupt?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry. If confirmed, I believe that the employees I lead will see this belief in action.**

**Question 261.** How do you intend to rebuild trust with the scientists and health care professionals you have openly disparaged, while ensuring they can effectively carry out their life saving work under your leadership?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry. If confirmed, I believe that the employees I lead and all health care professionals will see this belief in action.**

**Question 262.** How do you expect to lead and effectively collaborate with organizations that you have spent years publicly discrediting, undermining their work, and eroding public confidence in their missions?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry. If confirmed, I believe that those organizations will see this belief in action.**

**Question 263.** How can the American people trust that your decisions as HHS Secretary would prioritize public health and scientific evidence, rather than serving the interests of the anti-science groups that have bankrolled your agenda—as you have done in the past?

**Response: I believe in applying evidence-based, peer-reviewed, and replicable standards in scientific and medical inquiry. If confirmed, I believe that the American people will see this belief in action.**

**Question 264.** What qualifies you to be the HHS Secretary? Please list your experience working in government or health care, as well as any professional training or experience you have in practicing medicine.

**Response: I have written six books specifically on public health and many more peripherally concerning public health. I have litigated against all the public health agencies, which gave me a deep understanding of corporate capture and conflicts of corruption, and how to unravel them.**

**I founded and ran one of the premier advocacy organizations for children's health.**

**Question 265.** What is the largest number of people you have managed in your career, and how does that qualify you to manage HHS?

**Response: I founded three organizations, including Waterkeeper Alliance, which had 350 programs in 46 countries with more than 10,000 employees and volunteers. I've also built a movement for public health that played an important role in the last presidential election, and my leadership of that movement has allowed me to attract some of the best managerial staff in HHS history.**

### ***Conflicts of Interest / Litigation***

**Question 266.** In your recent ethics report, you wrote that you would stop collecting payments in vaccine lawsuits involving the government. However, you plan to continue accepting payments for referring clients to Wisner Baum. This arrangement raises serious concerns that, if confirmed as HHS secretary, you might make decisions that are motivated by your financial interests and not the public interest. Will you recuse yourself from any work that might impact Wisner Baum?

**Response: Section 6 of my Ethics Agreement fully sets forth my recusal obligations with respect to WisnerBaum cases and matters, and I will abide by it fully.**

**Question 267.** Are you currently the attorney of record in any vaccine related lawsuits?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 268.** The HHS Secretary is responsible for oversight of the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP). You have been involved with related litigation since 2018. Do you stand to earn any attorney fees from this litigation moving forward?

**Response: No. I will divest my interest in WisnerBaum VICP cases, as required by my Ethics Agreement.**

**Question 269.** If confirmed, do you believe you should be conflicted out of any work related to VICP until the litigation you are involved in has been fully resolved?

**Response: No. I will divest my interest in WisnerBaum VICP cases, as required by my Ethics Agreement.**

**Question 270.** Is there any other relevant litigation with which you are currently involved?

**Response: No.**

**Question 271.** Yes or no, have you ever reached a settlement agreement with an individual or organization that accused you of misconduct or inappropriate behavior?

**Response: Yes**

**Question 272.** Yes or no, have you ever agreed to or been subject to a non-disclosure agreement with any individual or organization?

**Response: Yes.**

**Question 273.** You recently resigned as chairman and chief legal counsel of Children's Health Defense (CHD), the anti-vaccine nonprofit you founded. In recent years, CHD has filed dozens of lawsuits challenging vaccines. If confirmed as HHS secretary, you would have "ultimate authority over vaccine approvals and recommendations." Do you plan to recuse yourself from any HHS decision processes involving vaccine manufacturers and other parties that CHD sued under your leadership?

**Response: Section 2 of my Ethics Agreement fully sets forth my recusal obligations with respect to such cases and matters, and I will abide by it fully.**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. from Senator Maria Cantwell.**

### **Question 1: Preventable Diseases- Measles**

The spread of measles is a current concern in Washington state. In Snohomish County, at least two people have been exposed to measles. Earlier this month, King County announced a confirmed measles case from a person who traveled through the Seattle-Tacoma airport.

1. As Secretary, will you do anything to modify access to the measles vaccine?

**Response: I would want to review the access requirements before commenting.**

2. Who funded and organized your 2019 trip to Samoa, and what was their stance on vaccines?

**Response: Children’s Health Defense. CHD wants safe and effective vaccines.**

### **Question 2: Preventable Diseases – Whooping Cough**

Nearly 170 people were infected with whooping cough in Clark County, Washington, last year – mostly children. This disease is preventable with vaccinations. The whooping cough vaccine was first licensed in the United States in 1914, and updated versions were approved in 1948 and 1991. The vaccine is safe and effective, and has been recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices since 2006. Will you preserve the whooping cough vaccine if confirmed?

**Response: Yes.**

### **Question 3: EMTALA**

When you were asked in today’s hearing if you believe that current federal law, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) requires hospitals to provide pregnant women in medical emergencies with abortion care, you said, “I don’t know.”

1. Can you answer that question now? As an individual seeking the top health role in the country, does EMTALA require hospitals to provide emergency abortion care, if needed to protect a woman's life or health?
2. When Idaho’s abortion ban was allowed by the Supreme Court to go into full effect without the protections of EMTALA, pregnant patients in medical emergencies had to be airlifted to neighboring states like Washington for emergency abortion care. Do you think that is a good way to run health care?
3. HHS’s current guidance is that hospitals must follow the law as established by EMTALA and provide abortion care if it is needed to preserve a patient’s life or health. Will you maintain this guidance?

**Response to Questions 1-3: EMTALA protects access to emergency medical care for all patients, including pregnant women, and the Department is responsible for evaluating EMTALA complaints. I believe the Department can simultaneously enforce EMTALA and respect the many state laws protecting the unborn and the right of conscience in healthcare. If confirmed, I look forward to working with CMS as well as Congress to ensure that both can be achieved.**

### **Question 4: Mifepristone Access**

Medication abortion covers 63% of abortions in Washington state. Our state government has been active in attempting to protect access to mifepristone. You did not provide clear answers to several questions about mifepristone in today's hearing. Please provide yes or no answers to these questions:

1. Will you direct the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take mifepristone off the market, if confirmed?

**Response: We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

2. Will you preserve current guidance that allows nurse practitioners and other providers to prescribe mifepristone – not just physicians?

**Response: We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

3. Will you preserve current guidance that allows mifepristone to be prescribed via telehealth?

**Response: We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

4. You said in today's hearing, "President Trump has asked me to study the safety of mifepristone. He has not yet taken a stand on how to regulate it. Whatever he does, I will implement those policies." Does that mean that you will direct the FDA to take mifepristone off the market if President Trump asks you to? Will you end telehealth access for mifepristone if President Trump asks you to?

**Response: We need to understand the safety of every drug, including mifepristone. As I stated during the confirmation hearing, President Trump has made it clear that he wants HHS to study the safety of mifepristone to ensure patient safety.**

#### **Question 5: Bird Flu**

At least 54 flocks have been infected with bird flu in Washington state since 2022. Yet another commercial farm was confirmed as having bird flu in Franklin County, Washington, earlier this month. Bird flu is hurting our agriculture, and it's driving up the cost of eggs. But you skipped a recent high-level bird flu briefing. You [said on X](#) last year in response to news about the government's purchase of the bird flu vaccine, "Why would you need this vaccine, unless you expected a much more virulent virus to appear which had mysteriously gained the ability to spread between humans? Will there be another lab-derived pandemic?"

**Response: As I have yet to be confirmed, I do not currently have the surveillance data indicating prospective sources for this emerging strain of influenza. Should this strain emerge into a pandemic threat, I will work with all agencies within HHS and across the Administration to organize a safe, robust, and efficient response.**

1. Do you believe bird flu was created in a lab?

**Response: No**

2. Will you block the distribution of the bird flu vaccine if you are confirmed?

**Response: I will work to ensure that any vaccine developed to address this emerging threat is upheld to FDA's standards of safety and efficacy and is one of the many tools in our toolkits to fight infectious disease.**

3. Washington State University (WSU) is one of the nation's premier institutions in protecting animal health. The Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL), located on WSU's Pullman campus, is a cornerstone of this effort, specializing in avian health and food safety. WADDL plays a critical role as part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), a coordinated system of 60 diagnostic laboratories across the country under the USDA. This network provides essential disease surveillance, responds rapidly to outbreaks such as avian influenza, and ensures timely communication of diagnostic outcomes to decision-makers and the public.

- a. If confirmed, will you support and advocate for the work of NAHLN in safeguarding animal and public health, particularly during disease outbreaks such as avian influenza?

**Response: If confirmed, I envision working with internal and external stakeholders in maintaining effective surveillance to guide the preparation for a quick and effective response.**

- b. What steps will you take to strengthen collaboration across federal, state, and university-associated animal health laboratories, like those in the NAHLN, to ensure rapid diagnosis and response to animal disease outbreaks?

**Response: I believe effective communication and transparency are important magnets for bridging alliances, building coalitions, and creating unity of effort across the public health sector.**

## **Question 6: Medicaid**

Congressional Republicans have proposed cutting over \$2 trillion in federal Medicaid funding by implementing per capita caps and work requirements, while lowering federal Medicaid contributions to pay for President Trump's expiring tax cuts.

1. Last time we met, you told me that you supported reauthorizing the 100% federal Medicaid match for Urban Indian Health Clinics. I believe it is because that you understand federal Medicaid contributions are critical to health care organization's financial stability.
  - a. Will you also support upholding existing federal Medicaid contribution levels?
2. In 2024, hospitals in my state faced a financial shortfall of almost \$400 million. Congressional Republicans' Medicaid cuts would cause people to lose coverage, further reducing revenue for hospitals and could cause some in rural areas to close maternity wards or shut down completely.

- a. You said that you will work to increase access to health care, especially in rural areas. How is cutting Medicaid funding consistent with your goal to “Make America Healthy Again?”
3. Medicaid funds important home and community-based services, including the Money Follows the Person program.
    - a. Will you commit to continuing the Money Follows the Person program and providing adequate Medicaid funding for it?

**Response 1-3: I am committed to improving healthcare quality and outcomes for all Americans, and Medicaid is an important program to support that goal. While decisions about funding levels are set by Congress, if confirmed, I would work with states as HHS Secretary to ensure that the Medicaid program is well administered, effective, and available for the most vulnerable beneficiaries, and that the states are given the flexibility to pursue innovative approaches that fit the needs of their citizens.**

### **Question 7: Community Health Centers**

There are 28 community health centers in Washington state, which served over 1.2 million patients in 2023. Despite your claim that “the White House has made clear that no funding will be denied to any American for benefits in any program,” community health centers’ funding was threatened by the chaos created by OMB memo M-25-13, issued on January 27, 2025. While as of this time the memo has apparently been rescinded by subsequent OMB memo M-25-14, issued earlier today, January 29, 2025, there remain significant questions and uncertainty about the scope of the January 27 memo and its ramifications for community health centers.

1. Do you recognize that community health center funding was threatened by the OMB memo freeze?
2. You said you “strongly support community health centers” in today’s hearing. If the administration proposes another
3. on all federal grants and loans, will you advocate for an exception for community health centers?
4. In Washington state, 10% of community health centers’ funding comes from federal grants. Are you committed to continuing federal community health center funding?

**Response 1-4: I support community health centers as does the President.**

### **Question 8: Stem Cells**

In today’s hearing, you said, “I will protect stem cell research. Stem cell research today can be done on umbilical cords and you don't need fetal tissue.”

1. Stem cell research today comes from embryonic or fetal tissue. Do you personally believe that innovative research should be allowed to continue?
2. During the first Trump term, the administration banned NIH funding for research involving fetal tissue from abortions – meaning that in-progress research projects were

suspended. The Biden administration rescinded that ban. Will you reinstate that ban, if confirmed?

**Response 1-2: Present-day regenerative medicine, which relies on stem cells, is based on adult stem cells derived from bone marrow, adipose tissue, or other specialty cells in the body. There is no need to use stem cells from fetal tissue or embryos.**

### **Question 9: Fluoride**

You previously [said](#), “The Trump White House will advise all U.S. water systems to remove fluoride from public water. Fluoride is an industrial waste associated with arthritis, bone fractures, bone cancer, IQ loss, neurodevelopmental disorders, and thyroid disease.” But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called fluoridation of drinking water one of ten great public health interventions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because of the dramatic decline in cavities that it caused.

1. Do you still plan to remove fluoride from public water if confirmed?

**Response: If confirmed I will look at the data regarding fluoride in water.**

2. If you do that, how will you prevent a spike in tooth decay, cavities, and other diminished oral health outcomes?

**Response: If confirmed, I will evaluate best practices for the uses of fluoride.**

### **Questions for the Record submitted to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. from Senator Michael F. Bennet**

Question 1: Last year, the FDA made Opill available over the counter. Opill is an oral contraception pill and has been taken safely for decades in the U.S. and around the world, to prevent pregnancy. As HHS Secretary, would you take steps to ensure this decision is protected and retain access to over-the-counter contraception?

**Response: I will follow the law and applicable conscience protections. Under the Trump administration, women will continue to have access to contraception.**

Question 2: We are faced with a mental health crisis in this country, particularly among our youth. Access to mental and behavioral health care is the main health care challenge that I hear about as I visit every single region in the state of Colorado. I know you have mentioned that mental health is high on your list of priorities.

• What are your specific plans to address this crisis if you were to be confirmed?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and learning more about how we can improve our current federal programs focused on children’s mental health, and how HHS can support providers who treat children and youth with mental health conditions.**

- Will you protect and strengthen President Biden’s mental health parity rule, or will you move to revoke it at the request of insurance companies?

**Response: I agree that mental health conditions in America are on the rise – and many struggle with timely and effective access to care. If confirmed, I will follow the law with respect to mental health parity requirements and work to foster affordable, accessible, high quality mental and behavioral health care that best meets the needs of individuals and their families. I look forward to working with you and others who are passionate about this issue.**

Question 3: Across rural parts of Colorado, one of the top issues I hear about is access to mental and physical health care. Hospitals are running on shoestring budgets with the constant threat of closing departments or shutting down altogether. There aren’t enough doctors. People have to wait months or drive hours to see a doctor. I know Colorado is not alone and that this is an issue all across rural America.

- What is your plan to support rural hospitals and providers on the brink of closure in areas with already low-access to health care, including mental and behavioral health?

**Response: As I addressed during the hearing, I recognize that rural health care is in crisis in this country and that is catastrophic for our entire country. I support President Trump’s agenda to look holistically at the various ways our federal programs currently support rural health and where those can be improved to meet our mutual goal of ensuring access to high quality care in rural areas.**

Question 4: Payor mix can make or break whether rural hospitals can keep their doors open, and having more patients with Medicaid, as opposed to being uninsured, helps hospitals stay afloat. Studies show that rural hospitals in Medicaid expansion states are less likely to close - nationally hospital closures increased by 110% in non-expansion states. In expansion states, the closure rate fell by 65%.

- Given Republican plans to cut Medicaid and the threat of states being forced to drop their expansion population, how would you make up the loss for hospitals so they can keep their doors open?

**Response: Rural healthcare is in crisis in this country. I recognize that rural health care is in crisis in this country and that is catastrophic for our entire country. I support President Trump’s agenda to look holistically at the various ways our federal programs currently support rural health and where those can be improved to meet our mutual goal of ensuring access to high quality care in rural areas.**

Question 5: This country is facing an enormous physician shortage. As more Americans age into Medicare, the shortage is expected to grow. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the United States will face a physician shortage of up to 86,000 physicians by 2036.

- What is your plan to address this shortage?

**Response: If confirmed, I will look at how our various federal healthcare workforce programs are meeting the needs of the country and how they can be improved to address shortages.**

- Can you outline your ideas to attract new doctors and other providers to rural communities?

**Response: As I said during the hearing, we have opportunities to evaluate how federal workforce programs such as Medicare GME are influencing the distribution of healthcare personnel, especially in rural hospitals.**

Question 6: For nearly over a decade, Republican and Democratic Administrations have failed to care for unaccompanied children who come to the United States. They have been wrongfully detained under *Flores* and subsequent regulation, or held in closed cells intended for medical isolation. There are currently over 6,000 children under HHS care, but there are likely tens of thousands more who are out of HHS custody in the United States and face high risk of trauma and health conditions.

Right now, President Trump is deploying the military to address our immigration challenges, like to carry out deportations and detain people, including kids and families, at the border and across the country. The military and our Homeland Security agents have said to my office that they have no training to care for kids, especially those who have experienced this kind of trauma.

- What is your plan to meaningfully strengthen care for kids, including unaccompanied children, in HHS's custody and work to ensure that other agencies care for the most vulnerable?

**Response: ORR will now be combating pervasive fraud in the UAC Program which enabled child trafficking, abuse, and unsafe conditions for vulnerable children. Our goal is to protect unaccompanied children from continued exploitation. ORR will work cooperatively with other agencies to combat child exploitation.**

- Will you commit to establish improved follow up procedures for kids who are no longer in HHS custody to ensure they aren't being exploited?

**Response: HHS will follow the law and regulations related to post release procedures in order to advance our goal of protecting unaccompanied children from continued exploitation. To that end, HHS will cooperate with law enforcement agencies who are conducting investigations related to child exploitation.**

Question 7: In 2020, President Trump signed the No Surprises Act into law – the culmination of my work with Sens. Cassidy and Hassan and others in Congress – to address surprise medical bills in a balanced way that protected patients. It protected patients from surprise medical bills; and it set up a process for providers and insurance plans to resolve payment disputes. Unfortunately, there have been some challenges in getting this process up and running, such as delayed payments and a decrease (instead of the desired increase) in contracts for in-network status between payers and providers.

- Will you work to implement the law as Congress intended and ensure there is a fair payment dispute resolution process that includes payments being made in a reasonable amount of time?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump's No Surprises Act, including the provisions of the law that were never implemented under the Biden Administration.**

Question 8: Antibiotic resistance and the broken antibiotic marketplace complicate

our response to public health emergencies, may lead to a public health crisis that is worse than the COVID–19 pandemic, and threaten the very foundation of modern medicine. It has been over 30 years, since the late 80s, since a new class of antibiotics has entered the market. Small biotech firms are keeping this industry alive, but in the past few years there have been a number of casualties and these companies have shuttered. Without better preparation and investment in novel antibiotics, some have projected up to 10 million deaths globally per year by 2030 if we don't invest now. Procedures including cancer chemotherapy, surgery, transplants, treatments of wounds and burns, and care of medically complex patients all rely upon safe and effective antibiotics.

Senator Todd Young and I have developed legislation—the PASTEUR Act—to establish a subscription model for new, critically needed antibiotics. Under PASTEUR, the Federal Government would enter into contracts with antibiotic developers to provide set payments for new antibiotics that are delinked from the volume of antibiotics used. In exchange, they will provide a reliable supply of antibiotics. The PASTEUR Act would also provide support for antibiotic stewardship programs in health care facilities—which are proven to reduce inappropriate antibiotic use and improve patient outcomes.

- Will you commit to working with us on legislation to prepare for the threat that resistant infections pose, including the PASTEUR Act, which both incents antibiotic development and supports the appropriate use of antibiotics?

**Response: It is troubling to read that our antibiotics are becoming less and less effective against bacterial infections. I cannot imagine going back to a pre-antibiotic world where previously treatable infections are now life-threatening. I agree that we need to foster innovation to ensure the availability of new antibiotics that continue to be effective. If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress on new approaches such as the PASTEUR Act.**

#### **Question for the Record submitted to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. from Senator Mark Warner**

Question 1: HHS and its agencies work with every single type of health care stakeholder, including helping them prevent and respond to cyber incidents. The Secretary is integral to this work. Cyberattacks on our health care institutions threaten patients' most private data and delay essential medical care, directly endangering Americans' lives and long term health. The recent Change Health cyberattack ground the payment system to a halt, but cyberattacks before and after have actually ground health care services to a halt, which is dangerous.

The HIPAA Security Rule was written in 2003. In 2024, HHS proposed to modernize the HIPAA Security Rule and implement mandatory minimum cyber standards, requiring hospitals, their vendors, and other providers to implement basic cyber practices like encrypting patient data and using multi-factor authentication.

- Will you commit to finalizing the proposed rule?

**Response: If confirmed, HHS will review all relevant cybersecurity rules to ensure that American patient data is protected.**

- What is your plan to prioritize cybersecurity at HHS, including within the HHS Office of the Secretary, across agencies within HHS (including FDA, CMS, OCR, ONC, OIG, ASPR, among others), and interagency (including with CISA, NIST, FBI, and others)?  
**Response: If confirmed, HHS will review all relevant cybersecurity rules to ensure that American patient data is protected.**
- What changes do you believe need to be made to improve the cybersecurity of the health care sector?  
**Response: If confirmed, HHS will review all relevant cybersecurity rules to ensure that American patient data is protected.**

Question 2: In your Federal ethics disclosure, you indicated that you plan to retain any legal contingency fees that are awarded regarding litigation against Merck over its HPV vaccine Gardasil, which prevents cervical cancer, in any suit that does not involve the Federal government. You will financially benefit by working against vaccines.

- Even if not required, will you commit to not retain these fees, in order to ensure there is clearly no ethical conflict and ensure your commitment to vaccines is never in question?

**Response: An amendment to my Ethics Agreement is in process, and it provides that I will divest my interest in this litigation.**

## Questions for the Record of Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)

### Climate & Health

1. In an October 2023 campaign ad, you were quoted as saying, “climate change is real and it is an existential threat.” President Trump has frequently said something different. What are fossil fuel emissions doing to our atmosphere and oceans?

**Response: I was nominated by President Trump to focus on Making America Healthy again, and HHS has little role in environmental policy. If confirmed, I will follow the directives of the President on such policies.**

2. In 2021, more than 200 medical journals published a joint editorial calling climate change the “greatest threat” to global public health. Do you agree with this? If not, please explain.

**Response: I was nominated by President Trump to focus on Making America Healthy again, and HHS has little role in environmental policy. If confirmed, I will follow the directives of the President on such policies.**

3. Within HHS, sits the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity. You’ve spent most of your career working on the existential threat of climate change. What do you plan to do with the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity?

**Response: The President has issued an executive order on this issue.**

3. The HHS Secretary has the responsibility to address threats to human health. What threats to human health do you believe are exacerbated by climate change?

**I was nominated by President Trump to focus on Making America Healthy again, and HHS has little role in environmental policy. If confirmed, I will follow the directives of the President on such policies**

- a. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), there were at least 2,325 heat-related deaths in the US in 2023. (Howard et al., 2024)
- b. Between 1992 and 2022, the incidence of Lyme disease in the U.S. has ranged from a minimum of 3.2 reported cases per 100,000 people in 1993 to a maximum of 18.8 per 100,000 people in 2022. Studies provide evidence that climate change has contributed to the expanded range of ticks, increasing the potential risk of Lyme disease. (EPA, 2025)
- c. The duration of ragweed pollen season has increased since 1995, leaving millions of Americans to deal with exacerbated allergies. (EPA, 2025)
- d. A greater risk of wildfires is increasing harmful pollutants, including particulate matter. Studies have found that increased levels of particulate matter from wildfires is responsible for an increase in premature deaths and illnesses.

5. Exposure to climate-related health threats occurs among many people, with many underlying health conditions. What steps will you take as HHS Secretary to protect Americans from climate-related health effects?

**Response: If confirmed, I will use all the authorities of the Secretary and all the resources of HHS to promote the health of all Americans.**

6. A 2021 report coproduced by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health, and the Wisconsin Health Professional for Climate Action estimated that health care costs related to the combustion of fossil fuels total nearly \$820 billion in the U.S. each year. To estimate this cost, researched looked at the costs of morbidity and mortality, considering the cost of premature deaths, medical care, rehabilitation and homecare, prescription medications, and mental health treatments, as well as lost wages and lost productivity. What do you believe the true health costs of the combustion of fossil fuels are, and in what range must they be measured?

**I was nominated by President Trump to focus on Making America Healthy again, and HHS has little role in environmental policy. If confirmed, I will follow the directives of the President on such policies**

**Behavioral Health**

1. Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) provide person- and family-centered integrated services for any individual with a mental or substance use disorder who seeks care, including opioid use disorder. As Secretary, will you commit to continuing the CCBHCs Grant Program?

**Response: Yes, CCBHCs are part of a law passed by Congress in an attempt to help address the serious problem of mental health and substance abuse. I look forward to working with you on this and other programs that provide care to those with behavioral health conditions.**

2. Despite strong evidence that medication is the most effective treatment for opioid use disorder, only one in five Americans with opioid addiction receive medication treatment that could help them quit and stay in recovery. What is your plan to expand access for those trying to access substance use disorder treatment?

**Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and learning more about how we can improve and expand our current federal programs focused on caring for those with substance use disorders.**

3. Millions of Americans experience mild to moderate mental health and substance use disorder issues, yet many struggle to access timely and effective treatment. Primary care often serves as these individuals' first point of contact, making it a critical setting for addressing behavioral health needs. Integrated care models that combine behavioral health and primary care have successfully improved outcomes by treating the whole person in a coordinated manner. As CMS continues prioritizing patient-centered care, how would you strengthen the integration of behavioral health and primary care services?

**Response: I am committed to improving healthcare quality and outcomes for all Americans and that includes the integration of primary care and behavioral health services.**

### **End of Life Care**

1. While half of all patients facing end-of-life decisions choose hospice, about half of those make the election too late to fully benefit from the holistic care hospice provides. Many of these late election beneficiaries experience expensive emergency room visits and hospitalizations that could have been avoided. Will you let Rhode Island test the following Medicare end of life flexibilities? Please confirm the individual flexibilities below:

a. Ensuring people do not have to spend three nights in the hospital before the time in a skilled nursing facility is paid for.

b. Allowing families to have their loved one stay in the home, while respite care is provided to relieve caregiver burn out.

- c. Not forcing patients to choose between curative and palliative treatment, when they are undergoing one of the toughest times in their lives.
- d. Allowing patients nearing death to receive home health services without a requirement that they also be “homebound.”
- e. Allow for continuity of care for people who use nurse practitioners and physician assistants as their PCPs, allowing them to certify patients as beneficiaries for hospice care.

**Response 1a-e: End-of-life care decisions are difficult and sensitive for patients and their families. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, CMS, and stakeholders to explore appropriate solutions to improve quality of care for beneficiaries and families facing challenging decisions.**

### **Gun Safety**

- 1. We know that compared to other leading causes of death, far fewer credible research articles have been published on gun violence, and due to a lack of funding, researchers have been actively deterred from focusing their careers and research efforts primarily on firearm violence. Do you support federal funding for gun violence prevention research?

**Response: If confirmed as Secretary, my objective will be to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the American public. As such, I will work to address underlying behavioral health and substance abuse issues.**

### **Infant Deaths**

- 1. In 2022, over 3,700 infants in the U.S. lost their lives to Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), with one-third of these deaths attributed to suffocation. New research published on January 27th, 2025, revealed a nearly 12% increase in SUID cases from 2020 to 2022. More than ninety percent of these cases are considered preventable, especially with the availability of safe and smart sleep technologies. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address the rise of preventable SUID cases?

**Response: Infant deaths are a tragedy and this is another case where we need to better understand why our nation continues to get sicker despite devoting an ever-increasing share of our nation’s resources to health. I look forward to working with you to analyze the best current options available to policymakers on this issue if confirmed.**

### **Question for the Record submitted to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. from Senator Cortez Masto.**

**Question 1:** The Prescription Drug Inflation Rebate Program helps control rising medication costs in Medicare by requiring manufacturers to pay rebates if price increases outpace inflation. Given its impact, should this program be extended to the commercial market to ensure broader affordability and prevent excessive price hikes on prescription drugs for all patients?

**Response: The issue of drug pricing and drug costs is one of great concern to Americans. My understanding is that extending inflation rebates to the commercial market would**

**require action by Congress, however, if confirmed, I commit to implementing the laws that Congress passes in this area. I look forward to working with the President and Congress to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans.**

**Question 2:** Ground ambulances are vital to community health care, providing emergency response and interfacility transport. A CMS report<sup>1</sup> confirms that transport costs far exceed reimbursement, particularly from Medicare and Medicaid. This funding gap threatens service sustainability. How would you address this reimbursement shortfall in order to protect patient access to ambulance services?

**Response:** Ground ambulance services are a vital part of community health care, helping patients in times of need. President Trump recognized this priority when he launched the Emergency Triage, Treat and Transport model through the CMS Innovation Center. If confirmed, I will work with CMS to understand why the Biden Administration chose to discontinue the model designed to support access to ambulance services. I also commit to implementing any laws Congress passes to protect patient access to ambulance services.

**Question 3:** What changes would you make to the Medicare Graduate Medical Education program to better address workforce shortages in rural and underserved areas?

**Response:** There are unmet opportunities to bolster the health care workforce in rural and underserved areas, including through improvements to the Graduate Medical Education program. If confirmed, I will prioritize working with CMS, HRSA, and Congress to identify the most impactful policies to guarantee robust access to care for Americans living in these areas.

**Question 4:** What actions would you take to instruct the Department of Health and Human Services to meaningfully invest in primary care to better serve patients nationwide? Would you support efforts to measure and ultimately increase the amount of primary care spending in federal health programs?

**Response:** I am committed to improving healthcare quality and outcomes for all Americans and that includes primary care. Primary care providers are on the front lines for treating patients with chronic health conditions. I think there are many tools the Department could use to better support primary care providers, especially through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Primary care will play a key role in addressing America's health care crisis and improving access will help make America healthy again. If confirmed, I will make primary care a priority for the Department and work with Congress on this issue.

**Question 5:** Given that in 2023, 43% of health center revenue in Nevada came from Medicaid—amounting to \$56M in payments for 45,000 patients—while 35,000 uninsured patients generated just under \$5M in payments, will you commit to preserving federal funding,

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<sup>1</sup> CMS. Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System (GADCS) Report: Year 1 and Year 2 Cohort Analysis. (December 2024).

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-ground-ambulance-data-collection-system-gadcs-report-year-1-and-year-2-cohort-anwithoutalysis.pdf>

including the Section 330 Grant Funding, to help cover this gap and ensure continued access to care?

**Response: I support community health centers, as does the President. Community health centers are an important source of care for many Americans, particularly people living in rural areas. If confirmed, I will work to foster better health outcomes and quality care for all Americans, including through community health centers.**

**Question 6:** Tribal health facilities serve 2.5 million Native Americans a year, historically, Indian Health Services (IHS) has suffered from a 25% vacancy rate. I have worked across the aisle with my Senate colleagues to rectify this issue. Do you commit to ensuring these Tribal health care services are adequately staffed, receive funding, and can recruit and retain Tribal health care doctors?

**Response: I will work with you, this Committee, and your colleagues on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to find innovative solutions to the staffing shortages and service delivery issues impacting IHS, tribal communities, and rural America as a whole.**

**Question 7:** Many Native American Tribes face unique challenges when it comes to accessing health care, including the use of Medicare and Medicaid. What steps would you take to ensure that Tribal nations have equitable access to these programs and how would you address any barriers that prevent these communities from receiving the full benefits they are entitled to?

**Response: The 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States reside in some of the most rural and underserved parts of the country. Health access in these areas can be a pervasive challenge and it is unacceptable. I will work with you, this Committee, and other internal and external partners to find innovative solutions whether that includes access to technology, ways to encourage workforce expansion, or other unexplored and novel ideas.**

**Question 8:** The health care needs of Native American communities are often underserved, and Indian Health Services (IHS) faces significant challenges in delivering adequate health care. What steps would you take to strengthen health care services for Native Americans and do you commit to upholding the federal trust responsibility that the U.S. Government has to Native American Tribes to provide adequate health care?

**Response: If confirmed, I intend to uphold the Department's legal, social, and moral obligations for the health services promised to American Indian and Alaska Native communities.**

**Question 9: Do you have any conflicts of interest that would prevent you from fulfilling your duties as Secretary of Health and Human Services? If so, how do you plan to divest and resolves these conflicts?**

**Response: I have worked with the Office of Government Ethics and the Designated Agency Ethics Official at HHS to resolve potential conflicts that would prevent me from fulfilling my duties as Secretary. My Ethics Agreement fully sets forth my divestment, recusal and other commitments and obligations, and I will abide by it fully.**

**Question 10:** As Secretary of Health and Human Services, you would be responsible for overseeing crucial early learning programs through the Administration of Children and Families that millions of families depend on for child care, as a support for them while they work, and as a

means of setting their children up for success in school and beyond. If you are confirmed, what is your commitment to the important work of this agency? What specific programs would you focus on and what are your goals for the future of these programs during your tenure?

**Response: If confirmed as HHS Secretary, I will work with the leadership at the Administration for Children and Families to execute the laws passed by Congress as efficiently and effectively as possible, including the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start programs.**

**Question for the Record submitted to Robert F. Kennedy from Senator Warren:**

Question 1: Private equity firms engage in roll-up strategies to consolidate healthcare providers, create local monopolies, and ultimately raise prices and lower quality for patients. If confirmed as HHS secretary, what actions would you take to prevent consolidation and protect competition?

**Response: If confirmed I look forward to working with Congress and other agencies across the Administration to understand how we can best ensure high quality care, promote competition, and provide health care at a good price for American patients.**

Question 2: The HHS Secretary under President Biden, Xavier Becerra, created HHS' first chief competition officer to promote competition in health care markets and work with the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice to address concentration. Would you create the same or similar position and coordinate with other agencies to promote competition?

**Response: If confirmed, I will continue to work with partner federal agencies in the most efficient manner possible, and consistent with applicable laws, to promote competition in the marketplace.**

Question 3: Do you believe that private equity companies should be allowed to own health care providers, insurers, or other relevant entities?

**Response: There is no law I know of preventing private equity from owning health care entities.**

Question 4: Currently, patients largely do not have the means to know if their health care provider is owned by a private equity company. The Biden Administration finalized a rule that would force institutional providers that enroll with Medicare to disclose this information to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Do you plan on implementing this rule, and would you push to make private equity ownership information reasonably accessible to the American people?

**Response: If confirmed, I am committed to providing all Americans, consistent with applicable laws, with radical transparency when it comes to information that matters for their health care decisions, including pricing and quality data. I look forward to working with CMS to make sure that seniors and their families have the information they need to receive quality care.**

Question 5: Over the last several years, private equity companies have bought up clinical trial sites, potentially threatening the integrity of medical research. What, if any, actions would you take to address this threat?

**Response: I am unaware of any law preventing this, though I encourage transparency in ownership and avoiding any conflicts in contracting.**

Question 6: Do you support state efforts to strengthen prohibitions on the corporate practice of medicine?

**Response: States have the right to pass and implement laws and regulations that best fit the needs of the state and its citizens.**

Question 7: President Trump's Executive Order on Withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO), dated January 20, 2025, directs the United States to withdraw from the WHO by "revoking" the Letter to the United Nations Secretary-General from President Biden dated January 20, 2021, which retracted the first notice of withdrawal issued by the prior Trump administration on July 6, 2020. In your opinion, when will the United States' withdrawal from the WHO become final? On what date would the notice become effective?

**Response: HHS will withdraw from WHO pursuant to the applicable executive order.**

Question 8: If confirmed, do you commit to instructing HHS components to respond to requests for information from all Members of Congress, even if they do not come from the full committee? Specifically, can you commit to responding to requests for information from members of the Minority?

**Response: HHS will respond promptly and appropriately to congressional requests.**

Question 9: If confirmed, will you commit to posting your official calendar monthly?

**Response: Yes.**

Question 10: To the best of your knowledge, are HHS components identifying records for proactive posting in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)? And if not, how would you ensure they do so to comply with the public records law?

**Response: I am not aware of the HHS FOIA policy, but, if confirmed, HHS will follow the law.**

Question 11: What is your understanding of the role of the HHS IG?

**Response: Inspectors General can protect taxpayer money against fraud, waste, and abuse while improving federal program efficiency.**

Question 12: If you are confirmed, will you commit to protecting the independence of the HHS IG?

**Response: If confirmed, I will follow the law and respect the Inspector General Act of 1978 and its subsequent amendments, consistent with the limitations on that statute imposed by operation of the Appointments Clause of the Constitution.**

Question 13: If you are confirmed, will you ensure your staff complies with inspector general deadlines established for requested communications, providing witnesses, providing documents, and that those witnesses will be protected from reprisal for their testimony?

**Response: If confirmed, I will follow the law and respect the Inspector General Act of 1978 and its subsequent amendments, consistent with the limitations on that statute imposed by operation of the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. I will comply with requests for witnesses and documents consistent with the law governing executive privilege, the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Privacy Act, and the whistleblower protections found in the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 and any relevant Executive Orders.**

Question 14: If you are confirmed and you are not able to comply with HHS IG requests and deadlines, will you notify the Republican and Democratic members of the committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial?

**Response: If confirmed, I will follow the law and respect the Inspector General Act of 1978 and its subsequent amendments, consistent with the limitations on that statute imposed by operation of the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. I will comply with requests for witnesses and documents consistent with the law governing executive privilege, the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Privacy Act, and the whistleblower protections found in the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 and any relevant Executive Orders.**