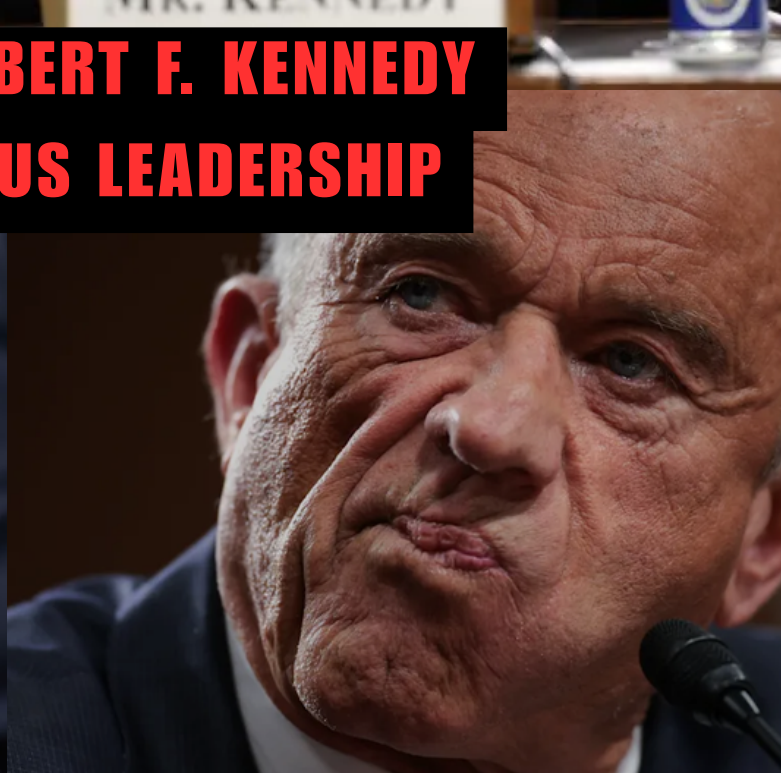




COSTS, CHAOS, AND CORRUPTION:

**203 DAYS OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY
JR.'S DISASTROUS LEADERSHIP**



**AN INVESTIGATION BY SENATE
FINANCE COMMITTEE RANKING
MEMBER RON WYDEN AND SENATOR
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Throughout his confirmation process in the U.S. Senate, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. displayed unfitness to serve as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Nevertheless, nearly every Republican Senator fell in line, voting in favor of his nomination. Kennedy was sworn in as HHS Secretary on February 13, 2025 and Americans are now suffering the consequences each and every day.

It should come as no surprise, given Kennedy's well-documented history of spreading misinformation and dangerous conspiracy theories, that his first 203 days as Secretary have been an unmitigated disaster. His actions are increasing Americans' health care costs, causing chaos, and furthering the Trump Administration's endless stream of corruption. For example:

- **Costs**: Kennedy is a key instigator of the disastrous Republican health care agenda. He helped pass Trump's budget bill, which gives massive tax handouts to the ultra-wealthy and corporations, like Big Pharma, while terminating health insurance for more than 15 million people and raising health care costs for everyone. Kennedy's purported North Star is to 'Make America Healthy Again,' but the law is diametrically opposed to that goal. The Republican budget bill will cost Americans their lives and their health coverage, while hurting their wallets.
- **Chaos**: Kennedy is systematically dismantling HHS in service of his anti-science agenda, first by decimating and threatening the critical staff and programs that keep Americans safe and healthy and second, by destabilizing the nation's gold-standard research enterprise by attacking anything contrary to his warped understanding of public health. For Kennedy, chaos and cruelty are the point – they erode public trust in the systems, institutions, research, and officials that protect the nation's wellbeing every day – allowing Kennedy to promote his dangerous vaccine pseudoscience and misinformation.
- **Corruption**: Kennedy regularly disregards the rule of law and co-opts the office of the Secretary to line the pockets of his family and his cronies. Nowhere is this pattern more apparent than in his self-serving quest to erode vaccine access nationally.

This report sets examples of Kennedy's costly, chaotic, and corrupt actions from every day he has served as Secretary. Each of Kennedy's 203 days in office cement one devastating reality: Kennedy has wrought havoc across the health care system and harmed the American people, especially vulnerable children, frail seniors, pregnant women, and people with disabilities. At the end, the report contrasts Kennedy's statements and commitments throughout his confirmation process to the actions he has taken as Secretary.

Kennedy's confirmation is a blight on our nation's history with catastrophic consequences for the American people. As this report illustrates, the situation worsens with each passing day. Kennedy must be held accountable for his actions, and an immediate course correction must take place to mitigate the numerous harms he has already caused and those he has set in motion.

Part 1: RFK's Daily Horribles

Feb. 13: Kennedy, a prominent vaccine skeptic, is [confirmed](#) as Secretary by the U.S. Senate. Despite Kennedy's long-standing, alarming history of promoting anti-vaccine conspiracy theories and undermining public trust in health institutions, only one Republican Senator voted against his confirmation.

Feb. 14: Under Kennedy's leadership, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel were [given access to sensitive information related to unaccompanied children](#), which is maintained by HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Such information sharing [repurposes ORR's child welfare functions into an immigration enforcement effort](#) which compromises the care of children, deters timely family reunification, and is likely in violation of the law.

Feb. 15: Under Kennedy's leadership, [5,200 probationary HHS workers received termination notices](#) claiming, without justification, that they were "not fit for continued employment because [their] ability, knowledge and skills do not fit the Agency's current needs, and [their] performance has not been adequate to justify further employment at the Agency." The probationary employee status reflects length of tenure in the current role, rather than performance issues. These firings hinder HHS's ability to deliver on core functions.

Feb. 16: Under Kennedy's leadership, the [probationary employees at the Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) responsible for reviewing the safety of food ingredients, medical devices, tobacco products, and other items were fired – on a Saturday. The HHS Office of the Inspector General [recently found](#) that the FDA fails to inspect food facilities within required timeframes and conducts fewer inspections of food facilities as compared to pre-COVID-19 levels, a problem likely to be exacerbated by reduced staffing numbers.

Feb. 17: Under Kennedy's leadership, [at least 750 probationary employees at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) received termination notices](#) – on a Sunday. The indiscriminate firings reportedly included scientists and public health workers who liaise with local health department personnel to stop infectious disease outbreaks and personnel who assess medical devices for cancer patients, suggesting that the agency's ability to deliver on critical functions was fundamentally eroded.

Feb. 18: Kennedy made his first HHS departmental remarks. During his remarks, Kennedy threatened that staff "[who are unwilling to embrace \[my\] kinds of ideas can retire](#)." He did not acknowledge the thousands of public servants who had been improperly and unjustly terminated as part of HHS's mass gutting or the existential impact that such firings had – and continue to have – on the agency's ability to deliver the essential programs and services it is required, by law, to provide. **That same day**, the National Kidney Foundation [sounded the alarm](#) that the mass firings at HHS included "a significant number of employees at HRSA's Division of

Transplantation who have been working on modernizing the organ transplant system.” In order for the Congressional intent of the *Securing the U.S. OPTN Act* to be fulfilled, adequate staffing within HHS and a focus on modernization are imperative. Following up on this staffing concern, Ranking Members Wyden and Sanders [sent a letter](#) to Kennedy asking about firings within the Division of Transplantation and that Kennedy fulfill a commitment made in a response to a Question for the Record following his nomination hearing to “ensure proper staffing at HHS and its sub-agencies to ensure the success of the OPTN Modernization Initiative.” The response was due on March 5, but Kennedy has not yet replied, undermining his purported commitment to “radical transparency.”

Feb. 19: Kennedy [prematurely ended](#) the CDC’s “Wild to Mild” influenza vaccine educational awareness and advertising campaign. Kennedy’s action was set against the worst flu season the nation has suffered in nearly 30 years, and furthered his long-standing, anti-science crusade against vaccines.

Feb. 20: Kennedy [indefinitely postponed](#) a long-scheduled Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) meeting without providing any rationale for this change. This postponement foreshadowed Kennedy’s forthcoming assault on ACIP, which was, prior to Kennedy’s tenure, the nation’s premier advisory committee on vaccine safety.

Feb. 21: Under Kennedy’s leadership and just two days after he ended an influenza vaccination awareness campaign, the [CDC confirmed two new cases](#) of avian flu in humans in Wyoming and Ohio.

Feb. 22: Under Kennedy’s leadership and amid the ongoing grant freeze at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), there has been a [substantial divestment in critical scientific research](#), including cancer research, that placed the health of the American public at risk. For the nine-day period that ended on February 22, \$285 million fewer dollars in essential, continuing grants were disbursed compared to the same period in 2024.

Feb. 23: Kennedy put proprietary company information and personally identifiable health information at risk when he [instructed](#) HHS employees to respond to Elon Musk’s “*What did you do last week?*” email, which requested that agency employees provide Musk with a detailed list of their week’s work. The NIH Acting Director [reportedly told employees not to respond](#). Within hours, HHS [reversed course](#) and instructed employees to “pause” responses, demonstrating that Kennedy failed a basic management test with his initial guidance.

Feb. 24: Kennedy finally officially [withdrew](#) as attorney of record for multiple plaintiffs in litigation against Merck related to its Gardasil vaccine, a status he had previously incorrectly characterized in a sworn statement. Kennedy received 10 percent of any fees awarded in cases he referred to Wisner Baum. During his confirmation process, Kennedy attempted to retain his financial interest in these cases. Following extensive pressure from Senate Democrats, Kennedy

finally committed to [divest](#) these payments, but actually chose to reroute his stake [to his son](#). Additionally, during his confirmation process, Kennedy incorrectly [reported](#) in his signed Ethics Agreement that he was “not an attorney of record” in [multiple cases](#) and [refused to commit](#) to recusing himself from HHS, FDA, and CDC decisions and communications related to Gardasil.

Feb. 25: Kennedy failed to respond to Senator Alsbrooks’ [request](#) that HHS rescind its guidance that illegally capped indirect cost rates that research institutions rely on to sustain groundbreaking, life-saving research and patient clinical trials. This undermines Kennedy’s purported commitment to “radical transparency.”

Feb. 26: In spite of Kennedy’s downplaying of the measles outbreak, the Texas Department of State Health Services confirmed that an [unvaccinated, school-aged child died of measles](#). The child’s preventable passing marked [the first measles death in the United States since 2015](#). There are no FDA-approved treatments for measles, and Kennedy has consistently refused to support measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccination as the best – and only – effective protection against the disease. **That same day**, [Kennedy downplayed the child’s death](#) at the Trump Administration’s first full Cabinet Meeting by stating, “[i]t’s not unusual [for children to die of measles]. We have measles outbreaks every year.” **That same day**, Kennedy [canceled the upcoming Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee \(VRBPAC\) meeting](#). Historically, the VRBPAC met in March to identify the flu strains it expected to be circulating in the next flu season and the FDA used that information to direct vaccine manufacturers on the appropriate composition of flu shots.

Feb. 27: Under Kennedy’s leadership, continuing his broad-based assault on science and research and reflective of his broken commitment to “radical transparency,” the two-day [Rare Disease Day](#) annual meeting hosted by the FDA and NIH that brings together members of the rare disease community to share lived experience and promote research, was [canceled](#).

Feb. 28: Kennedy [announced his intent](#) to immediately [rescind](#) the policy on public participation in rulemaking (called the Richardson Waiver) for health care programs regulated by HHS, breaking with over five decades of precedent that allowed members of the public and external experts to make their voices heard. **That same day**, under Kennedy’s leadership, the NIH [canceled over a dozen grants related to improving access to transgender health care](#) because the agency’s leadership determined that the work no longer aligned with “agency priorities.” This is part of the nationwide, anti-LGBTQ+ agenda that is playing out at the federal, state, and local levels. **That same day**, Children’s Health Defense, the anti-vaccine group Kennedy led, [premiered](#) a bizarre documentary that elevated numerous conspiracies and prominently featured Kennedy. The film claims to “open [the viewer’s] eyes to the globalist agenda.” [In service of this effort, the trailer](#) includes horrific footage from 9/11. Following images of planes hitting the Twin Towers, it cuts to Kennedy, questioning what entity is responsible for the attacks, saying “we were told they destroyed the World Trade Center” and, in a string of nonsense, claiming 9/11 ultimately led to the need for a global vaccine conspiracy.

Mar. 1: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH delayed funding for a [project](#) by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), which would have supported research on adolescent alcohol misuse and mentoring early-career clinical addiction science investigators. The NIH also delayed funding for an NIAAA [project](#), which was developing a sexual assault risk reduction program for college women who engage in heavy alcohol or cannabis use. This is an extension of Kennedy's broad-based assault on science and research.

Mar. 2: Kennedy [wrote](#) that [health and lifestyle changes can prevent measles](#) by stating that "[g]ood nutrition remains a best defense against most chronic and infectious illnesses" in an op-ed posted on *Fox News*. Measles is a highly infectious and deadly disease, and the United States is currently suffering from the worst measles outbreak in over 30 years. Kennedy has refused to consistently support MMR vaccination as the best – and only – effective protection against the disease, even though the [CDC website states](#) that, "[t]he best way to protect against measles is to get the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines." **That same day**, Kennedy [posted a picture of himself hiking](#) on Instagram in California that sparked public outrage and frustrated HHS personnel who were in the midst of an unprecedented assault on federal employees. A former Trump official [commented to Politico](#), "[w]hen you're taking a selfie out at Coachella [in California], it's pretty clear you're checked out."

Mar. 3: Under Kennedy's leadership, Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) required HHS employees to name five accomplishments for the week. Departmental communication [acknowledged](#) that responses may "be read by malign foreign actors," likely putting the highly sensitive, proprietary information held by the FDA and other agencies at risk. This was yet another example of Kennedy failing a basic management test. **That same day**, Kennedy [accepted the resignation of top HHS spokesperson Thomas Corry](#), who an anonymous HHS employee described as "the one adult in the room." According to reporting, Corry was alarmed by Kennedy's lackluster response to the nation's measles outbreak. **That same day**, Kennedy [officially rescinded](#) the Richardson Waiver, reducing the rights of the public to comment on HHS grants, loans, and benefits that impact their health care.

Mar. 4: Kennedy described the CDC's measles response as producing "very, very good results" [in an interview on Fox News](#). In fact, the United States is currently suffering the worst measles outbreak in decades. When asked what the federal government is doing to address the deadly outbreak, Kennedy named supplying and treating people with measles with an antibiotic, a steroid, cod liver oil, and Vitamin A. In fact, there are no FDA-approved treatments for measles, and the best – and only – effective protection against the disease is MMR vaccination, which Kennedy did not mention and has consistently refused to unquestionably support.

Mar. 5: Under Kennedy's leadership, the CDC walked back the chaotic, unfounded termination of some of its employees and restored some individuals' jobs. One employee reportedly [reflected](#), "[n]one of this is normal. There's no rhyme or reason that I can tell."

Mar. 6: Kennedy's anti-vaccine posture ramped up as Texas pharmacies [reported MMR vaccine shortages](#). The best – and only – effective protection against measles is MMR vaccination, which Kennedy has refused to consistently support, leading one to question whether HHS is actually working to address MMR vaccine shortages in outbreak areas.

Mar. 7: Kennedy – in partnership with other agency heads – [announced the cancellation of over \\$400 million in grants and contracts](#) to Columbia University. The decision to cancel significant [research-related](#) grants imperils the groundbreaking scientific work conducted at the university. This is part of Kennedy's broad-based assault on science and research.

Mar. 8: Under Kennedy's leadership, [DOGE was given access to the highly sensitive national child support database](#), called the Federal Parent Locator System (FPLS), which contains personally-identifiable information on all working Americans. This information holds significant commercial value as well as a competitive advantage for individuals seeking to use it for financial gain. Access to the FPLS is restricted by numerous federal privacy laws, and improper access to the system would be a flagrant violation of the law.

Mar. 9: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH began canceling grants related to vaccines and vaccine hesitancy, including a [trial](#) that would have increased influenza vaccinations for individuals seeking care in emergency departments.

Mar. 10: Under Kennedy's leadership, the [NIH canceled over 33 grants](#) that supported research into vaccine hesitancy or efforts to increase vaccine uptake, both of which are critical research areas that help inform national efforts to protect people from vaccine-preventable illnesses. One of these cancelled grants included the study of the safety and effectiveness of the [shingles vaccine](#). These actions are a continuation of Kennedy's broader war on vaccine access and confidence.

Mar. 11: Kennedy affirmed that the federal government “should [let \[avian flu\] go through](#)” bird populations to see which animals survive. This is a [reckless, inhumane, and anti-scientific](#) strategy that gives the virus the opportunity to mutate, jump across species, and continue to threaten the nation's food supply. In the same interview, Kennedy falsely stated that the virus “doesn't appear to hurt wild birds,” even though there is extensive documentation of avian flu [decimating wild bird populations](#). **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, HHS [announced](#) the closure of six Office of the General Counsel (OGC) regional offices across the country. These closures have a [devastating impact](#) on the health and safety of vulnerable populations as OGC staff work on-the-ground to help keep vulnerable seniors in nursing homes and children in Head Start programs safe, for example.

Mar. 12: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH suspended grants to universities across the country supporting a broad range of research studies aimed at reducing health disparities,

advancing mental health and HIV prevention, and addressing substance use among marginalized populations. These included interventions to reduce vaping and drug use among LGBTQ+ youth, promote mental health care integration in low-resource settings, improve HIV outcomes for women and trauma-affected individuals, and develop school-based prevention tools for adolescent mental health equity. Several studies also focused on using mobile and digital health tools to reach underserved communities, including LGBTQ+ youth. The termination of these studies represents a setback in efforts to expand culturally competent care, prevent HIV and substance use disorders (SUDs), and close persistent gaps in behavioral and community health for populations that have long been overlooked.

Mar. 13: Under Kennedy's leadership, [HHS removed a 2024 Surgeon General's advisory on gun violence](#). [CDC data](#) show that there were at least 46,728 firearm-related deaths in 2023. [This further](#) placed the agency out of step with the public health community for ideological purposes and endangers the health of the American people.

Mar. 14: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH terminated a grant to Columbia University that would have helped combat cervical cancer by assessing the impact of vaccine reminders on human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination. There is minimal existing research regarding the use and efficacy of text message vaccine reminders for teens in low- and middle-income countries. This termination dealt another blow to global efforts to combat HPV, prevent cervical cancer, and encourage vaccination.

Mar. 15: It was reported that Kennedy had a 15-minute "[information gathering](#)" phone call with anti-vaccine doctor Ben Edwards. At this time, the measles outbreak was continuing to worsen, and local officials were reporting an alarming increase in unproven remedies.

Mar. 16: Under Kennedy's leadership, the [NIH Acting Director informed scientists that all mRNA research must be reviewed](#) directly by Kennedy's office and the White House. In the same reporting, an NIH-funded scientist reported being directed to remove all mRNA vaccine references from applications. These actions were the first steps that signaled, under Kennedy's leadership, that the NIH would walk away from the field of mRNA vaccine research – the same cutting-edge technology that produced the COVID-19 vaccine in record time, saved thousands of lives, and helped enable a return to normalcy for millions nationally.

Mar. 17: Kennedy, in support of his anti-vaccine crusade, had "[lengthy meetings](#)" with UFC fighter Conor McGregor to discuss the nonexistent link between "[autism and vaccines](#)." Numerous peer-reviewed studies have debunked any connection between autism and vaccines. McGregor has been [convicted of assault and held civilly liable for rape](#) in addition to other criminal arrests.

Mar. 18: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH terminated a clinical trial that would have studied the effectiveness of the immediate use of an antibiotic after unprotected sexual contact in

reducing the risk of sexually transmitted infections in PrEP Users and LGBTQ+ men. This termination undermines larger efforts to research HIV, combat the spread of STIs, and improve public health.

Mar. 19: Under Secretary Kennedy's leadership, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [proposed](#) a rule that claimed to protect consumers and improve the integrity of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace. In reality, the rule kicks eligible people off of their health coverage and makes it easier for for-profit insurance companies to raise premiums and out-of-pocket costs and cover fewer services. Buried in the fine print of the proposed rule were estimates that it would kick two million eligible people off of their ACA coverage, increase premiums for working Americans by nearly \$3 billion over the next four years, and impose over \$360 million in new costs. It would also add an estimated 15 million hours in additional burdensome administrative requirements on consumers and states that operate their own ACA Marketplaces.

Mar. 20: Kennedy declared cell phones "[ha\[ve\] been shown to](#)" cause "cancer...[and] neurological damage to kids," despite numerous peer-reviewed [studies](#) disputing this claim. In fact, the NIH itself has stated that "[the evidence to date suggests that cell phone use does not cause brain or other kinds of cancer in humans.](#)"

Mar. 21: Under Kennedy's leadership, the \$200 million legal services contract for unaccompanied children in ORR custody was terminated [without warning and, seemingly, without cause](#). During the months-long legal process to reinstate the contract and resume services, unaccompanied children – as young as infants and toddlers – were forced to appear unrepresented and alone before judges in court.

Mar. 22: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH delayed funding to a project that would have advanced HIV science regarding the feasibility and acceptability of strategies to reduce internalized and intersectional stigma.

Mar. 23: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH terminated three clinical studies that would have worked to [prevent alcohol use and dating and sexual violence](#), studied interventions to [reduce alcohol-related harms](#) for LGBTQ+ women, and studied the effectiveness of behavioral therapy to reduce mental health challenges that cause [hazardous drinking among LGBTQ+ women](#). LGBTQ+ women are more likely to experience problematic alcohol use. Slashing funding that aims to combat and reduce this public health disparity continues the Trump Administration's pattern of deprioritizing work to address mental health and addiction, even as 40 million Americans suffer from a SUD.

Mar. 24: Under Kennedy's leadership, HHS unilaterally and immediately [rescinded \\$11 billion](#) in state and local public health grants. In some cases, the terminations were retroactive. These

grants supported [critical health department functions](#) (e.g., disease surveillance and outbreak response, immunization access, and community health programs).

Mar. 25: Kennedy [appointed a famed vaccine conspiracy theorist](#), David Geier, to lead a federal study into the relationship between immunizations and autism. Decades of extensive, deep research attempting to link immunizations and autism have been unsuccessful.

Mar. 26: Kennedy's anti-vaccine crony appointee Jay Bhattacharya [began his first day](#) as NIH Director. Bhattacharya was a [co-author of the Great Barrington Declaration](#), which called for weakening lockdown restrictions and allowing COVID-19 to naturally run its course through the population. **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, NIH employees were asked to urgently compile a list of grants related to "[fighting misinformation or disinformation](#)" and were instructed to search for topics including vaccine uptake, media literacy, social media, social distancing, and lockdowns.

Mar. 27: Kennedy [announced the consolidation of core agencies](#) in a massive reorganization of HHS from 28 divisions down to 15 divisions. In the same statement, Kennedy announced his intention to terminate 10,000 employees. Between prior firings, early retirement offers, and these new layoffs, the overall HHS workforce would be reduced by approximately 25 percent to 62,000 full-time employees. This was an unprecedented and baseless assault on the federal workforce. **That same day**, Kennedy oversaw the implementation of an Executive Order ([EO](#)) entitled Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Programs, which illegally exempted certain HHS staff and operating divisions, including staff at the FDA, CDC, Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, and ORR from the right to collectively bargain, and thus prevented these civil servants from due process and workplace protections.

Mar. 28: Kennedy [mocked](#) West Virginia Governor Patrick Morrisey about his weight, suggesting that the Governor should "do a public weigh-in once a month." Kennedy's ridiculing went even further when [he said to Governor Morrisey](#), "you look like you ate Governor Morrisey." **That same day**, Kennedy accepted the resignation of Dr. Peter Marks, Director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) at the FDA. In his resignation letter, Dr. Marks said that it has become clear to him that Kennedy "[wishes subservient confirmation of his misinformation and lies](#)."

Mar. 29: In response to Kennedy's pushing out of Dr. Marks, the influential biotechnology lobbying group Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) [issued the following statement](#): "We are deeply concerned that the loss of experienced leadership at the FDA will erode scientific standards and broadly [affect] the development of new, transformative therapies to fight diseases for the American people."

Mar. 30: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH terminated several studies that sought to address [HPV vaccine disparities](#) through tailored messages to hesitant families and improve

communication about [HPV vaccination in primary care clinics](#). These grant terminations reflect Kennedy's failure to renounce his earlier statements that the HPV vaccine is "dangerous and defective," and illustrate how he is weaponizing NIH research to fulfill a [personal vendetta](#) against the vaccine and its manufacturer, Merck.

Mar. 31: Under Kennedy's leadership, [HHS informed Title X grantees](#) that their funding – which was set to begin the next day as part of an ongoing five-year contract cycle – would be withheld. **That same day**, following Kennedy's endorsement of Vitamin A and C as defenses against measles, cases of pediatric Vitamin A poisoning increased by [39 percent compared to the same period in 2024](#).

Apr. 1: Under Kennedy's HHS reorganization directive, [termination notices](#) went out to 10,000 HHS employees, described as a Reduction In Force (RIF) effort. The mass firings hit the CDC, the FDA, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and the Administration for Community Living (ACL) the hardest. Additionally, five of HHS's ten regional offices were closed. A class action lawsuit was later filed to challenge the RIF, charging that HHS used inaccurate data and that "glaring errors" occurred in the selection process.

Apr. 2: Under Kennedy's leadership, which gutted HHS, the [FDA missed its deadline to make a decision](#) on traditional approval for Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine had previously been authorized for emergency use.

Apr. 3: Kennedy admitted that the indiscriminate, mass firings at HHS were a disaster, [stating that](#) "[p]ersonnel that should not have been cut, were cut. We're reinstating them...20 percent of those [cuts] are going to have to be reinstated because we'll make mistakes." **That same day**, Kennedy's [close confidante](#) and TV star Dr. Mehmet Oz – who has never held government office – [was confirmed as Administrator](#) of CMS within HHS. Oz had extensive financial interests in the health care industry – with [holdings in health insurance, pharmaceutical, fertility, and vitamin companies](#) – that raised questions about his ability to impartially oversee programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and the ACA. Oz also [skirted](#) paying Medicare and Social Security taxes. Further, a [study in the British Medical Journal found](#) that fewer than 50 percent of the medical recommendations made on his TV show were supported by evidence, casting doubt on Oz's credibility and trustworthiness.

Apr. 4: Kennedy [announced](#) his *Make America Healthy Again* (MAHA) tour. Among other initiatives, the tour highlighted states' efforts to ban fluoridation of public water. The rollback of fluoridation contradicts the best available evidence that community water fluoridation is a proven method of preventing dental decay, as supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Dental Association, other national health organizations, scientists, and dentists.

Apr. 5: Public reporting [detailed](#) the chaotic RIF effort at HHS executed under Kennedy's leadership. A former CDC health communication specialist said that "[h]aphazardly doesn't even begin to describe" the RIFs. An employee who was not fired was quoted as saying that "[w]e are already just picking up the pieces. It will take weeks at a minimum but likely one to two months to get in a place where [HHS and its employees are] functioning somewhat OK again." **That same day** marked the [one-year anniversary of a statement Kennedy](#) released that defended the January 6 attack on the United States Capitol. Kennedy said that he wanted to speak to "people of diverse viewpoints on it in order to make sense of the events and what followed. I want to hear every side." Kennedy went on to say that "reasonable people, including Trump opponents, tell me there is little evidence of a true insurrection." **That same day**, Republicans in the U.S. Senate passed a budget blueprint that paved the way for Trump and Congressional Republicans to enact more than \$1 trillion in health care cuts, decimating Medicaid and the ACA. Senate Republicans voted down a bipartisan amendment led by Ranking Member Ron Wyden of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance to strike instructions to cut more than \$800 billion from Medicaid.

Apr. 6: Kennedy [met](#) with two doctors whom he called "extraordinary healers" – Richard Bartlett and Ben Edwards – and celebrated their use of unproven medications as treatments for measles. There are no FDA-approved treatments for measles, and Kennedy has refused to consistently support MMR vaccination as the best – and only – effective protection against the disease. Bartlett and Edwards are part of Kennedy's anti-vaccine cabal and have questionable medical histories. In 2003, Bartlett was [disciplined](#) by the Texas Medical Board for "inappropriate treatment of patients with intravenous antibiotics and other medications." In 2021, Bartlett was issued a [criminal trespass warning](#) for looking through the trash at a hospital where he did not have admitting privileges. Edwards regularly hosts anti-vaccine activists on his podcast. Additionally, in late March, according to a video posted by [Children's Health Defense](#), Edwards went to a Texas clinic while he was contagious with measles, placing the health and wellbeing of the clinic's patients, and the broader community, at risk. **That same day**, U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Cassidy [posted](#) on social media, "[e]veryone should be vaccinated! There is no treatment for measles. No benefit to getting measles. Top health officials should say so unequivocally b/4 another child dies." **That same day**, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported [the tragic, preventable death of a school-aged child](#) from measles earlier in the week. According to the press release, the child was not vaccinated and had no reported underlying conditions.

Apr. 7: Kennedy announced that he would be [directing the CDC to stop recommending fluoridation](#) of water across the country. **That same day**, during his MAHA tour, Kennedy further eroded public trust in the practice by praising Utah's move to ban fluoridation. Kennedy stated, "[i]t makes no sense to have it in our water supply. And I'm very, very proud of this state for being the first state to ban it. And I hope many more will come." **That same day**, in support of Kennedy's directive, the Environmental Protection Agency announced it would be [reviewing the health risks of fluoride in drinking water](#). The rollback of fluoridation contradicts decades of studies and years of evidence that community water fluoridation is a proven method of

preventing dental decay, as supported by AAP, the American Dental Association, other national health organizations, scientists, and dentists.

Apr. 8: Kennedy [described](#) the federal government's response to the measles outbreak as a "model for the rest of the world" at a press conference. The United States is currently suffering from the worst measles outbreak in over 30 years, and the recent measles deaths of school-aged children are [the first in the United States](#) since 2015.

Apr. 9: Kennedy sowed doubt in the effectiveness of the measles vaccine in an interview, [stating that](#) "we're always going to have the measles, no matter what happens, as the vaccine wanes very quickly." The [CDC website states](#) that, "most people who are vaccinated with MMR and MMRV will be protected for life." In the same interview, Kennedy stated that closely planning a formal restructuring and examining HHS employees' job responsibilities prior to termination "takes too long" and would risk losing "political momentum," which is why HHS chose to forgo such an approach.

Apr. 10: Kennedy [elevated his bizarre, dangerous fixation on autism](#) and claimed that "[b]y September, we will know what has caused the autism epidemic" at a Trump Administration Cabinet Meeting. At the same meeting, he also lied about rates of measles and stated that they "have now plateaued," even though the national outbreak was still growing. **That same day**, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives [passed a budget blueprint](#) that paved the way for Trump and Congressional Republicans to enact the largest health care cuts in history, terminating health coverage for more than 15 million Americans who have coverage through Medicaid and the ACA Marketplaces.

Apr. 11: Under Kennedy's leadership, [CMS wrote to State Medicaid Directors](#) stating that gender-affirming care for transgender minors "lack[s] reliable evidence...[and such] interventions are now known to cause long-term and irreparable harm." This is contrary to the best available scientific evidence and longstanding medical consensus.

Apr. 12: Reports surfaced that Kennedy's RIF [eliminated the entire office at HHS responsible for setting the annual poverty guidelines](#) that determine eligibility for public benefits relied on by 80 million Americans. This small, technical team was fired without warning. According to one affected employee, "[t]here's literally no one in the government who knows how to calculate the guidelines... And because we're all locked out of our computers, we can't teach anyone how to calculate them." The elimination of this office, and countless others, underscores Kennedy's reckless mismanagement of HHS programs.

Apr. 13: Under Kennedy's leadership and set against the backdrop of his long-standing anti-vaccine crusade, [HHS was set to revise official webpages](#) to include statements that stress personal choice in relation to vaccines. Since vaccines are already only administered after a

provider receives informed consent from a patient, as required by law, these types of statements might further vaccine hesitancy and misinformation.

Apr. 14: New reporting [highlighted](#) the devastation that the widespread RIF effort at HHS, executed under Kennedy's leadership, had on the Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), giving a "gift to the tobacco industry" and halting evidence-based programs to help Americans stop smoking. This essential office was gutted while an HHS spokesperson was quoted as saying the agency is "committed to investigating any potential [root] causes of the chronic disease epidemic" and, according to the CDC, tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. The OSH was the office responsible for reducing tobacco use and addressing its health impacts through comprehensive prevention and control strategies.

Apr. 15: At a [signing event for draconian MAHA EOs](#) in Indiana, including one that imposes work requirements in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Kennedy reiterated falsehoods about measles. Kennedy [declared](#) that people "get measles because the vaccine wanes," and suggested that, rather than "rely" on the vaccine, doctors "have to know how to treat measles." There are no FDA-approved treatments for measles, and Kennedy has refused to consistently support MMR vaccination as the best – and only – effective protection against the disease.

Apr. 16: Kennedy held a [press conference](#) where he improperly referred to autism as "a preventable disease" and, contrary to the best evidence, asserted that environmental factors are the primary cause of autism. At the same event, Kennedy disparaged people with autism, saying: "[t]hese are kids who will never pay taxes, they'll never hold a job, they'll never play baseball, they'll never write a poem, they'll never go out on a date." **That same day**, a [leaked HHS budget document](#) was published by multiple news outlets. It detailed plans to further dismantle HHS, including the elimination of offices and programs that support preventative health, long-term care safety, firearm safety, and minority health.

Apr. 17: Under Kennedy's leadership, billions of dollars in federal grants [must be manually reviewed](#), dramatically delaying grant award recipients' receipt of funds. This reportedly impacted tens of thousands of organizations, even though HHS said that the requirement would not impact "support for critical programs."

Apr. 18: Kennedy sought to [walk back](#) his horrifying, hateful remarks about people with autism in an interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity. Kennedy [had previously said](#) that autism "is an individual tragedy as well. Autism destroys families but more importantly it destroys our greatest resource, which are our children...we have to recognize we are doing this to our children and we need to put an end to it."

Apr. 19: Kennedy [posted](#) a video on social media of himself speaking at the Tribal Self-Governance conference in Arizona. Kennedy has faced significant [pushback](#) from American Indian and Alaska Native leaders related to layoffs at programs that support these populations.

Apr. 20: Kennedy declared that autism “[dwarfs the COVID epidemic and the impacts on our country because COVID killed old people](#).” In reality, [many young people also died of COVID-19, and many young people with chronic conditions](#) were seriously impacted by the pandemic, too. Kennedy also reiterated his long-standing conspiracies that “mold,” “vaccines,” and “ultrasound” are potential causes of autism.

Apr. 21: Under Kennedy’s leadership, the NIH [declared](#) that research grants, cooperative agreements, and other awards will be unilaterally terminated in the event that the federal dollars support an entity that upholds diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) or engages in “prohibited boycott[s].” One of the entities impacted was the University of Washington’s Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center, one of only 35 Alzheimer’s disease research centers across the country, which received \$15 million in funding from NIH. [Around 7.2 million Americans in 2025 are living with Alzheimer’s](#), and that number is expected to grow without scientific intervention.

Apr. 22: The NIH Director Bhattacharya walked back Kennedy’s [earlier commitment](#) that “[b]y September, we will know what has caused the autism epidemic.” Bhattacharya [said](#) that “[i]t’s hard to guarantee when science will make an advance. It depends on, you know, nature has its say.”

Apr. 23: Kennedy [declared](#) that “there’s been a systematic suppression of studies of toxic chemicals” at NIH. This claim is [manifestly false](#), and Kennedy’s statement further undermined the NIH and spread disinformation.

Apr. 24: Kennedy is [sued by groups for withholding Title X grants](#). Title X provides high-quality family planning and sexual health care to all, including contraceptive care, cancer screenings, and other preventive services. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association (NFPRHA) claim that HHS is unlawfully withholding \$65.8 million in funds from the nation’s single federally funded family planning program. This put 865 service sites at risk of closure and left an estimated 850,000 patients at risk of being unable to access critical health care.

Apr. 25: Under Kennedy’s leadership, access to critical health care services has eroded nationally. Throughout April, five Planned Parenthood facilities located in rural, medically underserved, and health professional shortage areas in [Michigan](#) and [Utah](#) closed. These facilities provided essential health care, including cancer screenings, sexually transmitted infection (STI) screenings, contraceptive care, and other reproductive health care services. Following these

closures, in some areas in Michigan, the nearest Planned Parenthood health center will now be 203 miles away.

Apr. 26: Under Kennedy's leadership, the [World Trade Center Health Program](#), which provides care to people diagnosed with 9/11-related illnesses related to exposure to toxic dust and debris, is under threat. The Trump Administration has fired, rehired, and fired over a dozen program staff. Since the firings, the program has not enrolled a single new person for care.

Apr. 27: Under Kennedy's leadership, fewer children are being discharged from ORR custody as compared to previous months. In April, only 45 children were released from custody to sponsors, compared to 5,151 children in January. Institutional settings expose all children to risk of abuse, neglect, and trauma, and the goal is always to release children to safe placements in-community. The precipitous decrease in children released from ORR custody coincides with the imposition of more onerous background check requirements for sponsors and sponsor households, citizenship requirements for sponsors, and the suspension of children's access to legal counsel.

Apr. 28: Under Kennedy's leadership, agencies issued a "[Report to the President on Protecting Children from Surgical and Chemical Mutilation](#)." The report sets out how HHS has furthered the Trump Administration's extremist and anti-scientific approach to trans health care and highlights how HHS has slashed grant funding for trans health programs, including one clinical study that tested [the effects of an app providing information and support to trans young adults \(ages 18-24\) on reducing these individuals' suicidal thoughts](#).

Apr. 29: In a televised interview with Dr. Phil, Kennedy continued his anti-vaccine crusade and [advised parents to "do your own research"](#) prior to vaccinating infants. **In the same interview**, Kennedy [said that he believes](#) the federal Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is spraying [chemicals](#) out of airplanes.

Apr. 30: Kennedy incorrectly [claimed that the MMR vaccine contained](#) "aborted fetus debris" in a News Nation interview. This builds on his long-standing history of fueling anti-vaccine conspiracies, which undermine confidence and sow confusion.

May 1: Kennedy announced that all vaccines would be required to be [tested against placebos and developed without mRNA technology](#). HHS incorrectly characterized this as a "radical departure" from existing standards, even though new vaccines have already been tested against placebos. Experts suggested that this announcement could imperil the development of COVID-19 boosters. **That same day**, Kennedy [released an unscientific review](#) claiming that there is weak evidence to support gender-affirming care, highlighting purported risks of this care, and endorsing "gender exploratory therapy," a rebranding of long-discredited conversion therapy.

May 2: Kennedy [finally accepted](#) the HELP Committee's invitation to testify – more than a month after leadership first [proposed](#) a hearing on the mass terminations at HHS. During his confirmation process, Kennedy committed to appear before the HELP Committee on a quarterly basis.

May 3: This month, the Planned Parenthood Association of Utah [announced](#) it would be closing St. George Health Center. The facility is located in a medically underserved area as well as a health professional shortage area. In addition to the broad range of health services offered, the clinic counseled over 1,200 individuals on contraceptive options over an 11-month period. Under Kennedy's leadership, access to critical health care services has eroded nationally.

May 4: In [an interview on Meet the Press](#), Trump reflected on his first 100 days. He [stated](#): “we’re not cutting Medicaid, we’re not cutting Medicare, and we’re not cutting Social Security.” Just two months later, under Kennedy's leadership, Trump signed the Republican budget bill into law. It includes the largest health care cuts in history, decimating Medicaid and the ACA. [CBO estimated](#) that the bill would rip health insurance away from over 15 million Americans across the Medicaid program and ACA Marketplaces. It will also [trigger over \\$500 billion](#) in cuts to the Medicare program.

May 5: Kennedy gave a sweeping interview to Laura Ingraham on Fox News. Most notably, Kennedy [said](#), “we’re not getting rid of any critical research, and we’re not getting rid of any of the programs that are critical to Americans’ healthcare.” Under Kennedy's leadership, billions of dollars in critical research funding to the NIH have stopped, mRNA vaccine research has been gutted, and thousands of public servants have been fired.

May 6: Kennedy [appointed](#) Vinay Prasad, an outspoken critic of vaccines and masks in preventing the spread of COVID, as the head of CBER within the FDA. Fewer than four months later, Prasad would leave this position, before [returning two weeks later](#). [During his time](#), Prasad oversaw the [restrictions](#) on COVID-19 vaccines and declined to approve new therapies for muscular dystrophy and advanced forms of melanoma.

May 7: Kennedy [launched a partnership](#) between the NIH and CMS to create a platform which will integrate claims data, electronic health records, and consumer wearables data to study the cause of autism and other chronic disease. Although an HHS spokesperson [denied the claim](#), the autism community has suggested this will be akin to a national autism registry.

May 8: Kennedy [posted on social media](#) that wellness influencer Casey Means “was born to hold” the job of Surgeon General, the day after Trump [nominated her to the role](#), calling attacks on her qualifications “absurd” and just “how badly entrenched interests – including Big Food and its industry-funded social media gurus – are terrified of change.” This is yet another example of Kennedy's embrace of public health quacks – Casey is on record saying that birth control pills are a “[disrespect of life](#),” and has expressed skepticism about the Hepatitis B vaccination for

babies. Casey is also the co-founder of Levels, a wearable technology company that offers a continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) system with interactive software focused on metabolic health, and an influencer who makes money peddling conspiracy theories. Her brother, Calley Means, is a top adviser to Kennedy. He previously founded Truemed, a company that helps people use their pre-tax dollars on wellness items and wearable technology, including CGMS. Both Casey and Calley would benefit financially from Kennedy's crusade to encourage the uptake of wearable technology, such as CGM, for all Americans.

May 9: Under Kennedy's leadership, for the first time in five years, the United States [surpasses 1,000 measles cases](#). According to the CDC, 96 percent of these cases are among people who are unvaccinated, or whose vaccination status is unknown.

May 10: Under Kennedy's leadership, the NIH [defunded](#) biomedical engineering research to help infants with holes in their hearts and other defects.

May 11: Kennedy [swam in hazardous water](#) with "high levels of bacteria and other infectious pathogens" that is subject to a swim ban. Sewage-contaminated water can contain harmful microorganisms and chemicals, and swimming in it can cause gastrointestinal illnesses, skin infections, respiratory illnesses, or other types of diseases.

May 12: The House Energy & Commerce and Ways & Means Committees prepared for hours-long markups of Republicans' budget bill. This rushed, reckless bill served as the foundation for legislation that made the largest health care cuts in history. House Democrats [introduced dozens of amendments](#) to strip out policies to ensnare people enrolled in Medicaid and Marketplace plans in red tape, increase health care costs, and terminate health insurance for millions of families.

May 13: Absent a CDC Director, Kennedy was [empowered](#) to personally review vaccine recommendations from April's ACIP meeting. While Kennedy signed off on the Chikungunya vaccine, he did not adopt ACIP's vote to recommend the RSV and meningitis vaccines for certain groups.

May 14: Kennedy appeared before the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate HELP Committee. At both hearings Kennedy refused to recommend the MMR vaccine for children. When asked if he would vaccinate his own child against measles, Kennedy [told](#) the House Appropriations Committee, "I think if I answer that question directly that it will seem like I'm giving advice to other people, and I don't want to be doing that." That afternoon, at the HELP hearing, Kennedy [doubled down](#) on his refusal to support the life-saving vaccine, stating, "I am not going to just tell people everything is safe and effective if I know that there's issues." Kennedy also [testified that he had directed](#) the FDA to review abortion medication regulations and related data, embracing a flawed analysis produced by anti-abortion groups. Post-*Dobbs*, medication abortion is a cornerstone of reproductive health care access, and medication abortions

now account for [63 percent of all abortions in America](#). During the same Senate HELP Committee hearing, Kennedy again lied to Congress by reiterating that he “didn’t fire any working scientists [...] there were no working scientists fired during the RIF,” despite reporting that [hundreds](#) of scientists had indeed been fired. **That same day**, after erroneously [firing 90 percent of the workforce at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH), Kennedy reversed course and reinstated 328 employees, admitting to Senator Kim “we made a couple mistakes.” NIOSH conducts critical research and makes recommendations on the prevention of work-related injury and illness.

May 15: Kennedy’s crony, Dr. Oz, [amplified](#) an op-ed Kennedy [coauthored](#) – ‘If You Want Welfare and Can Work, You Must’ – in the New York Times. It advocated for so-called Medicaid work requirements, which will kick millions of people eligible for Medicaid off of health care by standing up massive red tape barriers.

May 16: Kennedy further delayed the [VRBPAC meeting](#). Historically, the VRBPAC met in March to recommend which flu strains it expected to be circulating in the next flu season, and the FDA would use those recommendations to direct vaccine manufacturers on the appropriate composition of flu shots. The March VRBPAC meeting was delayed to May.

May 17: Under Kennedy’s leadership, Novavax finally [received](#) full approval for its COVID-19 vaccine. The company only received full approval for the vaccine for use in adults 65 and older or those with underlying health conditions. The emergency authorization of the same vaccine had previously been available to anyone aged 12 and older.

May 18: Kennedy failed to respond to Ranking Member Wyden and Senator Warner’s [inquiry](#) regarding the mass firings of HHS employees and the impact of the HHS reorganization, undermining Kennedy’s purported commitment to “radical transparency.” The response was due on April 4.

May 19: Kennedy [met](#) with leadership from seven health technology companies. Six of the companies Kennedy met with are backed by Andreessen-Horowitz, one of the largest Trump-supporting venture capital funds. Additionally, several companies have been linked to scandals and serious safety concerns, including Hippocratic AI, which is developing AI nurses, [despite the lack of effective testing and involvement of external benchmarks or patients](#) in its development.

May 20: Kennedy [lied](#) to the Senate Appropriations Committee, [stating](#) that HHS is “continuing to fund” the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) and that there is “a team in Milwaukee...[with] laboratory support to the analytics... [and HHS is] working with the health department in Milwaukee.” In reality, all 26 CLPPP staff were placed on leave in April, and they have not had their jobs reinstated. The elimination of CLPPP hamstring the nation’s blood lead testing capacity and interventions to eliminate childhood lead poisoning.

May 21: The U.S. House Committee on Rules [passed](#) the Republican budget bill, a critical step towards passing the largest health care cuts in American history. Kennedy was an active force in helping to pass the bill and, since then, he has been an avid defender of its provisions.

May 22: The MAHA Commission released the “[Make Our Children Healthy Again Assessment](#),” which was riddled with errors, including [citations that were non-existent and misrepresentations of scientific findings](#).

May 23: Under Kennedy’s leadership, the number of patients served at the NIH Clinical Center has [plummeted](#) by almost six percent compared to the same period last year. The NIH Clinical Center is a renowned research hospital that offers cutting-edge care to people whose conditions align with NIH research areas. The CEO of the NIH Clinical Center said that the patient numbers “really don’t look too good” at a recent Board Meeting.

May 24: Kennedy failed to respond to Senator Alsobrooks and other Members of Congress’s [inquiry](#) regarding HHS’s sudden termination of \$12 billion in funding that states and communities were actively using to address urgent needs and protect Americans’ health, undermining Kennedy’s purported commitment to “radical transparency.” The response was due on April 7.

May 25: In [an interview on Meet the Press](#), House Speaker Mike Johnson defended that 190,000 Louisianans were projected to lose Medicaid coverage and suggested that these people were “refusing to work because they’re gaming the system.” About one month later, under Kennedy’s leadership, Trump signed the Republican budget bill into law. [CBO estimated](#) that the bill would rip health insurance away from over 15 million Americans across the Medicaid program and ACA Marketplaces.

May 26: Under Kennedy’s leadership, the length of stay for children in ORR custody has [increased significantly](#). In May, the average length of stay at discharge was 191 days compared to 37 days in January and the preceding months. Institutional settings expose all children to risk of abuse, neglect, and trauma, and the goal is always to release children to safe placements in-community. The precipitous increase in children’s length of stay in ORR custody coincides with the imposition of more onerous background check requirements for sponsors and sponsor households, citizenship requirements for sponsors, and the suspension of children’s access to legal counsel.

May 27: Kennedy – who is not a licensed medical professional and has no medical training – [removed the COVID-19 vaccine](#) from the recommended CDC schedule for pregnant women and most children. In a departure from the typical process, this decision was made without input from ACIP. This vaccine protocol change makes it harder for pregnant women and children to access the COVID-19 vaccine as CDC recommendations help form the basis of health coverage. **That same day**, Kennedy [criticized the World Health Organization](#) (WHO) in a joint statement with

the Argentine Minister of Health. **That same day**, Kennedy [stated that the government was likely to bar scientists](#) from publishing in some of the nation's leading journals because he views those journals as "corrupt." On the same podcast, he went on to threaten that "[u]nless those journals change dramatically, we are going to stop NIH scientists from publishing in them and we're going to create our own journals in-house."

May 28: Kennedy and his ally in promoting junk science, Dr. Oz, [offered to import hundreds of ostriches](#) with suspected avian flu into the United States and house them at Dr. Oz's 900-acre Florida estate, amidst the ongoing disease outbreak. The birds were subject to a kill order from the Canadian government because avian flu is highly contagious and can spread rapidly. [Millions of chickens](#) and [dozens of cows](#) have been slaughtered in the United States as a result of avian flu infections, [causing the prices of grocery items, especially eggs, to soar](#). **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership and as part of his anti-vaccine crusade, the [agency canceled a major Moderna contract](#) to develop an mRNA avian flu vaccine.

May 29: The White House [acknowledged](#) that the MAHA Commission's report, which was produced under Kennedy's direction and leadership, would be edited due to its inclusion of [illusory citations and misrepresentations of scientific findings](#).

May 30: Under Kennedy's leadership, the [FDA limited access](#) to a new COVID-19 vaccine. As part of Kennedy's anti-vaccine crusade, the lower-dose vaccine option would only be made available to limited populations. **On the same day**, the NIH announced the termination of a \$258 million program focused on finding a vaccine to prevent new HIV infections, jeopardizing promising new treatments for HIV and treatments for autoimmune diseases.

May 31: Under Kennedy's leadership, the long-awaited technology upgrades at health centers across the country were delayed. [HHS firings heavily impacted](#) the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) employees who were supporting around 1,200 health centers in launching this technology upgrade. It remains unclear when health centers received their technology upgrade and whether they received adequate technical assistance from HRSA.

June 1: Under Kennedy's leadership, the CDC [delayed the awarding](#) of the next cycle of state health departments' HIV Epidemic grants without explanation. A County Health Commissioner in North Carolina exasperatedly said that the grant renewal delay resulted in "lost months of work." **That same day**, the NIH suspended over one hundred research grants awarded to universities across the country. These grants were supporting studies focused on critical public health issues, including vaccine hesitancy and uptake, care for older adults, the impacts of alcohol use, dementia care, suicide prevention, HIV treatment and prevention, and more. The termination of these studies represents a profound setback in our ability to advance evidence-based interventions, close care gaps, and strengthen community health infrastructure. Cutting off funding for this kind of research not only delays scientific progress but also puts vulnerable populations, such as seniors, people living with HIV, and individuals at risk of suicide, at greater

risk, all while undermining the nation's capacity to respond to future public health crises with the tools of science and care.

June 2: Under Kennedy's leadership, there has been a [substantial decline](#) in childhood MMR vaccination rates.

June 3: Under Kennedy's leadership, CMS [rescinded critical July 2022 guidance](#) entitled "Reinforcement of EMTALA Obligations specific to Patients who are Pregnant or are Experiencing Pregnancy Loss," which reminded Medicare-participating hospitals of their obligation to provide all people with emergency, stabilizing health care – including abortion care when necessary – under federal law. Post-*Dobbs*, women seeking emergency reproductive health care have been denied medical care, turned away from hospitals, and, in some cases, lost their lives.

June 4: Under Kennedy's leadership, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has [brought around 500 children who were previously placed with sponsors back into ORR custody](#). Institutional placements put all children at risk of abuse, neglect, and trauma. Safe, in-community placements with sponsors is best practice.

June 5: HHS [rescinded](#) guidance that enabled the optional collection of data involving sexual orientation and gender identity on state Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) applications. This impedes the ability of States and HHS to understand the effects of health disparities on different populations.

June 6: Under Kennedy's leadership, [HHS awarded Brueckner Spitler Shelts PLC](#) a \$250,000 contract for Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) "expertise." The obligation was increased from \$150,000 to \$250,000 on August 13. This [signaled](#) Kennedy's intention to [dismantle](#) the VICP. A lawyer at the firm, Andrew Downing, has previously brought cases in vaccine court and worked on Gardasil litigation against Merck with Kennedy's [former law firm](#) Baum Hedlund (now Wisner Baum). Downing has a long history of [associating](#) himself with Wisner Baum and has appeared with Mary Holland, the CEO of Kennedy's anti-vaccine organization, Children's Health Defense, on a [web program](#) about Gardasil.

Kennedy has since hired Downing to advise him at HHS, raising legitimate questions about Kennedy's self-dealing and willingness to use his position to enrich his associates and family members. In a December 2024 motion, one of Downing's clients [explained](#) that Downing was discontinuing legal practice to accept a government appointment. Senate Finance Minority Staff identified Downing as a Counselor to the Secretary. However, it remains unclear *when* Downing joined the Trump Administration and *what* his specific responsibilities are. Like Downing, Kennedy performed considerable work related to Merck Gardasil litigation with Wisner Baum. Kennedy had an agreement with the law firm Wisner Baum, where he received 10 percent of fees awarded in cases he referred. During his confirmation process, Kennedy attempted to retain

his financial interest in these cases. Following extensive pressure from Senate Democrats, Kennedy finally committed to [divest](#) but chose to reroute his stake [to his son](#).

June 7: Kennedy [attacked](#) a journalist for her reporting on David Geier, an infamous vaccine skeptic who was disciplined by the Maryland Board of Physicians for practicing medicine without a license.

June 8: Under Kennedy's leadership, foreshadowing the ACIP coup that would be set into motion by Kennedy the next day, at least four ACIP members were [informed](#) that their status as Special Government Employees (SGE) would not be renewed.

June 9: Kennedy [fired all 17 members](#) of the ACIP. These individuals were independent scientists, clinicians, and researchers with expertise on vaccines. Up until then, ACIP had been considered the nation's premier advisory committee on vaccine safety. **That same day**, almost 100 [government scientists from across all NIH institutes and centers lambasted](#) the politicization of the agency in an open letter. They described the actions that have been taken at the NIH since Kennedy's confirmation as "policies that undermine the NIH mission, waste public resources, and harm the health of Americans and people across the globe."

June 10: Planned Parenthood North Central States (PPNCS) closed five sites in Minnesota and Iowa – many of which are located in rural and medically underserved areas – as part of a [previously announced restructuring](#). In all, eight PPNCS health centers are set to close in 2025 due to the combined impact of the Trump Administration's Title X fund freezing and Medicaid cuts in the Republican budget bill defunding Planned Parenthood health centers nationwide. Under Kennedy's leadership, access to critical health care like cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and birth control has eroded nationally.

June 11: Kennedy [appointed seven individuals](#) to his new sham ACIP panel who are unqualified, have serious conflicts of interest, and/or are outright vaccine alarmists. **That same day**, the CDC announced that it would be reinstating more than 450 employees who had been wrongfully terminated as part of the Department's haphazard RIFs, including staffers who worked on childhood lead and HIV programs.

June 12: Kennedy launched a solicitation for pitches for the ["Take Back Your Health" Campaign](#) related to wearable devices and healthy foods. Some of his closest confidants and advisors at HHS, including [Casey](#) and [Calley Means](#), could benefit significantly from this effort due to their financial ties to the wearable device industry. **That same day**, Kennedy repeated numerous falsehoods about vaccines [in a Fox News interview](#). He stated that, "children get between 69 and 92 vaccines before they're 18...But none of them have been safety tested...[s]o nobody has any idea what the risk profiles are on these products. And we don't know whether they have anything to do with the epidemic of chronic disease, almost all the chronic disease." The number of vaccines children actually receive before 18 is far lower than Kennedy stated and,

as Senator Cassidy [explained](#), “updating that vaccine does not require a new placebo-controlled trial to determine its safety. To require a placebo group would deny those patients access to the vaccine that has already been found safe.”

June 13: Under Kennedy’s leadership and in support of his anti-vaccine crusade, [HHS sent a document](#) to Congressional offices purporting to justify his unilateral amendments to the government’s COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for children and pregnant women. The document misrepresented studies and cited additional, unpublished and/or disputed studies.

June 14: Under Kennedy’s leadership, CMS officials were forced to [hand over](#) Medicaid enrollees’ personally identifiable information to the Department of Homeland Security, in violation of federal requirements that permit use of data only for Medicaid eligibility purposes, and not for immigration enforcement. Medicaid employees attempted to block the data transfer but were forced to comply.

June 15: Under Kennedy’s leadership of the gutting of the NIH, a 43-year-old mother of two named Natalie Phelps with Stage 4 colorectal cancer [experienced a life-or-death delay in treatment](#). Her care – which is part of an NIH clinical trial – was supposed to start in mid-June, but her participation in the clinical trial was delayed at least until July 21. Phelps, who has already undergone 48 rounds of chemotherapy, was reported as saying, “I’ve done everything I can do. There’s nothing else I can do. I’m really just out of options.” Phelps’ care delay is a direct result of NIH staffing cuts, [according to the clinical trial lead](#).

June 16: Kennedy [accepted the resignation of Dr. Fiona Havers](#), the scientist at the CDC who oversaw respiratory virus hospitalization data surveillance. In her resignation email, [Dr. Havers wrote](#) that it has become clear to her that the data would not be used “objectively or evaluated with appropriate scientific rigor to make evidence-based vaccine policy decisions.” **That same day**, Kennedy and his sham ACIP panel were [strongly rebuked by the recently removed ACIP panel](#). In their *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) Network piece, the former members describe Kennedy’s recent actions as having “left the US vaccine program critically weakened.”

June 17: The day after the [release](#) of the Senate’s even more draconian Republican budget bill, new polling found that Medicaid is extremely popular. [According to the poll](#), 83 percent of the public have favorable views of Medicaid. Kennedy played an active role in getting the Republican budget bill and its drastic cuts to Medicaid through Congress.

June 18: Kennedy considered directing ACIP to examine all vaccines that contain aluminum in furtherance of his anti-vaccine crusade. In some cases, aluminum is added to vaccines to generate a stronger immune response. [According to the CDC](#), the cumulative aluminum exposure in the childhood vaccine schedule is “low” and aluminum “is not readily absorbed by the body.”

June 19: Kennedy failed to respond to Ranking Member Wyden and other Members of Congress's [inquiry](#) regarding the agency's proposal to eliminate ACL, which will endanger older adults and people with disabilities, undermining Kennedy's purported commitment to "radical transparency." The response was due on April 30.

June 20: Under Kennedy's leadership, CMS [finalized a rule](#) that, according to the agency's own estimates, will terminate coverage for up [to 1.8 million Americans](#) who buy their own insurance on the ACA Marketplaces. The rule also ensnares eligible consumers in red tape meant to make it harder for them to access and keep their coverage, and makes it easier for for-profit insurance companies to raise health care costs and cover fewer services. CMS finalized this destructive rule, under Kennedy's leadership, in spite of [objections raised by Ranking Member Wyden and Senate Democrats](#) about the rule's harms, including higher health care costs, coverage loss, and needless red tape and enrollment hurdles.

June 21: Kennedy launched a campaign related to wearable devices and healthy foods. His closest confidants and advisors could [benefit significantly](#) from their financial ties to the medical device industry. For example, Calley Means, a senior aide to Kennedy, founded Truemed, a company that helps people use their pre-tax dollars on wellness items and wearable technology, including CGMs. Casey, his sister and the nominee for Surgeon General, co-founded a wearable technology company that offers a CGM system with interactive software.

June 22: Kennedy advocated against the production of cost-lowering renewable energy produced by offshore windmills, claiming that it would "[exterminate](#)" whale species. There is [currently no evidence](#) that windmills [significantly contribute to whale mortality](#), highlighting the questionable evidence that Kennedy uses to reach conclusions and make policy decisions.

June 23: Kennedy and Dr. Oz [celebrated](#) their new 'pinky-promise arrangement' with insurance companies to address concerns related to prior authorization, a term which describes the approval a person may be required to get from their insurer prior to getting coverage for a specific service. Kennedy [described](#) the voluntary, non-binding agreement as "momentous." [Reporting](#) has uncovered instances where prior authorization led to care delays resulting in blindness, paralysis, and even death, suggesting that the practice likely demands real, substantive reforms.

June 24: Kennedy [testified](#) before the House Energy & Commerce Committee Health Subcommittee Hearing. Continuing his anti-vaccine crusade, Kennedy falsely [stated](#) that he pulled the COVID-19 vaccine recommendation for pregnant women because "there was no science supporting that recommendation."

June 25: Kennedy took his anti-vaccine crusade global by announcing that the [United States would no longer contribute to Gavi](#), a global vaccine alliance that has helped [immunize over one billion children](#) across the world. Gavi has [prevented an estimated 19 million](#) deaths. **That same day**, Kennedy's new sham ACIP panel [voted to review the childhood immunization schedule](#),

signaling that Kennedy's cronies will further erode access to vaccines through this channel in the future.

June 26: Kennedy's new sham ACIP panel showcased [an unscientific presentation from Lyn Redwood](#), a [leader in the anti-vaccine movement](#) and the President Emerita of Children's Health Defense, an anti-vaccine organization Kennedy co-founded. Following Redwood's presentation, the [new ACIP appointees](#) voted 5-1 recommending against any version of the well-tested, multi-dose flu vaccine containing thimerosal, which is already only used in limited instances. In the lead-up to the ACIP meeting, it was [reported](#) that Redwood would join the CDC as an SGE in the vaccine safety office.

June 27: Kennedy spoke at the signing of two MAHA bills in Louisiana, including [a measure that will allow pharmacists to give ivermectin to patients without a prescription from a doctor](#). Ivermectin is a horse dewormer that [conspiracy theorists](#) frequently tout as a treatment for COVID-19, despite overwhelming scientific evidence showing it to be [ineffective](#). At the event, Kennedy also [declared](#) that "it is [the CDC's] fault [that] Americans are so sick." **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, [CMS launched a pilot program](#) requiring prior authorization in Traditional Medicare for the first time ever, by paying private Artificial Intelligence companies to determine coverage for certain services: the same tactics used by for-profit insurance companies to delay and deny patient care by burying doctors and patients in needless paperwork.

June 28: CBO [released](#) its preliminary estimates of the Senate Republicans' budget bill. CBO's analysis confirmed that the Senate version – which would end up becoming law – was even more draconian than the House-passed bill, amounting to over a trillion dollars in Medicaid and ACA cuts.

June 29: Kennedy failed to respond to Ranking Members Wyden and Sanders' [inquiry](#) regarding the sweeping firings at ACF that endanger children, seniors, and at-risk communities, undermining Kennedy's purported commitment to "radical transparency." The response was due on April 25.

June 30: Kennedy [shared in an interview](#) with former Fox News star Tucker Carlson, that "[w]e just brought a guy in this week who is going to be revolutionizing the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program." In the same interview, in furtherance of his harmful anti-vaccine crusade, Kennedy [claimed](#) that the CDC concealed a study related to vaccines and autism.

July 1: Under Kennedy's leadership, the Republican budget bill passed the Senate. The bill – which became law three days later – included the largest health care cuts in history. [CBO estimated](#) that the bill would rip health insurance away from over 15 million Americans across the Medicaid program and ACA Marketplaces.

July 2: During a [podcast interview](#) with Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry, when Kennedy was asked what drew him to health care issues, Kennedy responded that the connection between vaccines and autism attracted him, continuing to sow vaccine misinformation.

July 3: In an interview with Tucker Carlson, Kennedy [described](#) Trump, who was [convicted of 34 felonies](#) and liable for sexual assault, as “one of the most empathetic people” he had ever met.

July 4: Under Kennedy’s leadership and in stark contrast to his purported commitment to “radical transparency,” the [teams responsible for responding to public record requests](#) at NIH, CDC, ACF, and some centers at FDA were wiped out. This undermined government transparency and oversight. This date [marked the 59th anniversary](#) of the enactment of the *Freedom of Information Act* and the creation of this powerful government accountability tool. **That same day**, Trump signed the largest health care cuts in history into law, cementing Republicans’ long-held goal to repeal the ACA and deny health care to millions of American families.

July 5: Kennedy spread deep-state conspiracy theories about the agency he leads, referencing the existence of a “[regime of control](#)... of censorship, of using [HHS] to manipulate the truth in order to achieve an outcome of compliance among Americans.”

July 6: Under Kennedy’s leadership, a memo from the HHS OGC that details the strategy for attempting to make HHS grant terminations [appear more legally justified](#) after many of them were blocked by courts is leaked.

July 7: Attorney General Pam Bondi released an [unsigned memo](#), concluding in-part that there was “no client list” for convicted child sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein and announcing that the Department of Justice would not produce further documents related to Epstein. Kennedy has previously admitted to interacting with Epstein. In an interview with *Fox News*, Kennedy said that he and his family flew on Epstein’s jet “[two times](#),” including for a weekend fossil hunting trip, and that his wife had “some kind of relationship with Ghislaine Maxwell.” In the same interview, Kennedy said, “all of the information should be released” and any information related to “high-level political people that [Epstein] was involved with” should be “open to the public.” In March 2024, in [response to being asked about his documented friendship with Jeffrey Epstein](#), Kennedy detailed his friendships with other renowned child sex traffickers and pedophiles, sharing “I’m in New York for most of my life. You run into everybody in New York. I mean, I know Harvey Weinstein. I knew Roger Ailes. I knew, O.J. Simpson came to my house. Bill Cosby came to my house.” **That same day**, Kennedy was [sued by six leading medical societies](#) – including AAP and the American College of Physicians – and a pregnant physician plaintiff for acting arbitrarily and capriciously by unilaterally changing the COVID-19 vaccine recommendation for children and pregnant people.

July 8: Under Kennedy's leadership, [a retired Trump-supporting urologist](#) was appointed as a Senior Adviser to the CDC Director. According to the reporting, the doctor lacks any public health experience or expertise.

July 9: The [CDC reported a 33-year high of 1,288 measles](#) cases. Measles is highly contagious and can kill almost 3 out of every 1,000 people.

July 10: Kennedy [postponed the long-scheduled](#) U.S. Preventive Services Task Force meeting that was intended to discuss cardiovascular disease prevention. HHS did not clarify whether the meeting would be rescheduled. This is part of Kennedy's broader effort to dismantle advisory panels and reconstitute them for his own political and ideological gain. **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, [HHS reinterpreted](#) the decades-old *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act* (PRWORA) to exclude certain immigrant children, seniors, and adults from vital federal education, labor, and health programs, including Head Start and community-based health services.

July 11: Kennedy's crony Calley Means posted a [screed on social media](#) proselytizing the benefits of wearable technology. Both he and his sister Casey have financial ties to the wearable device industry and, as such, they could profit significantly from the uptake of such devices.

July 12: The Trump Administration [dismissed](#) charges against a physician who had been accused of giving children saline shots in place of COVID-19 vaccines, throwing away thousands of dollars worth of vaccines, and selling fake vaccination cards. Months earlier, Kennedy had celebrated the doctor's actions, stating that he "deserves a medal for his courage and his commitment to healing!"

July 13: HHS's official social media account praised Kennedy's crony, Dr. Oz, for "[delivering](#)" the Republican budget bill and lied about how the bill would "deliver care to the most vulnerable Americans." In reality, the bill included the largest health care cuts in history. [CBO estimated](#) that the bill would rip health insurance away from over 15 million Americans across the Medicaid program and ACA Marketplaces.

July 14: Kennedy [lied in an interview](#) on *Fox Business Network* claiming that, "there's no cuts on Medicaid. There is a — there's a diminishment of the growth rate of Medicaid, which is bankrupting our country. And, by the way, the national debt is also a determinant — a social determinant — of health." According to [independent estimates by CBO](#), over 15 million people will lose health coverage under the new draconian Republican policies, including almost 8 million Medicaid beneficiaries. **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, HHS [finalized](#) thousands of employees' firings. These individuals' employment status had been left in limbo following the Supreme Court's decision that HHS could move forward with widespread terminations.

July 15: Under Kennedy's leadership, CMS [gave](#) ICE personnel unprecedented, direct access to Medicaid enrollees' personal health information for immigration enforcement. Such information sharing helps repurpose Medicaid's health care functions into an immigration enforcement effort which could have a chilling effect on people accessing the essential health care services to which they are entitled.

July 16: Under Kennedy's leadership, set against a landscape of chaotic federal funding and the range of Medicaid changes, a [specialized transitional housing facility](#) for adults with mental health challenges in New Hampshire announced it would be closing after "[years of providing a great service to the community.](#)" **That same day**, the Colorado Division of Insurance [announced](#) a 28 percent premium spike in its ACA market due to actions taken by Republicans this year.

July 17: Under Kennedy's leadership, SAMHSA [eliminated federal funding for a suicide and crisis hotline](#) that offered individualized, affirming support to LGBTQ+ youth in crisis, despite very high suicide rates among this population. **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, CMS [released a communication](#) to states that rescinds state flexibility to provide multi-year continuous eligibility to children and adults, a data-informed practice that reduces the risk of eligible children and families losing coverage due to administrative barriers or temporary fluctuations in family income.

July 18: Kennedy's gutting of the NIH and changes to the FDA review process are estimated by CBO to [decrease the number](#) of new drugs developed in the future by dozens – a direct assault on innovation that jeopardizes all Americans' health and safety.

July 19: Kennedy [hiked in jeans](#) in the blazing Arizona sun on a day when temperatures reportedly hit 107 degrees. His choice of attire appeared to conflict with CDC guidance that people "[wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing](#)" while in extreme heat climates. The Secretary should always model best public health practices.

July 20: Under Kennedy's leadership, access to critical health care services has eroded nationally. Throughout July, 11 Planned Parenthood facilities across six states *closed*. These facilities provided essential health care, including cancer screenings, STI screenings, contraceptive care, and other reproductive health care services.

July 21: Kennedy is [sued by 20 states and the District of Columbia](#) for the Trump Administration's decision to exclude certain immigrant children, seniors, and adults from accessing essential federal education, labor, and health programs, including Head Start and community-based health services. **That same day**, [HHS announced](#) an "initiative" to reform the organ transplant system with no mention of the bipartisan Securing the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Act that was signed into law in 2023. This law is now Kennedy's responsibility to implement; however, HRSA staff hired to modernize the organ transplant system and protect patients and donors were fired by Kennedy.

July 22: Kennedy adopted the new sham [ACIP's recommendation to remove thimerosal](#) from well-tested, multi-dose flu vaccines. Thimerosal was already only used in limited instances, but this action will nevertheless undermine vaccine access and supply.

July 23: Under Kennedy's leadership, HHS illegally withheld funding from Head Start facilities across the country and caused critical Head Start programs to close, according to [a new decision by the Government Accountability Office \(GAO\)](#). The GAO is an independent, nonpartisan government watchdog. **That same day**, Ranking Member Wyden [sounded the alarm](#) about an ACA affordability crisis on the immediate horizon based on early proposed rate filings, including a proposed 19 percent premium spike in Pennsylvania. Republicans' refusal to extend enhanced premium *tax* credits in their multi-trillion dollar *tax* bill will lead to unaffordable premium spikes for millions of working and middle-class families who purchase health insurance on their own. Republicans' attacks on the ACA will ensnare small business employees and owners, gig workers, family caregivers, near retirees, and Americans looking for work in red tape and increase their health care costs. Premiums for the 2026 plan year are rising by a [median of 18 percent](#) across 312 ACA marketplace insurers in all 50 states, which would be the largest spike in premiums in almost a decade.

July 24: Under the direction of Trump's EO "[Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Street](#)," Kennedy was placed in charge of an effort to expand the use of civil commitment by forcibly removing people experiencing homelessness from the streets and institutionalizing people with mental illness. This approach is an affront to the [large body of evidence](#) demonstrating that forcing people into treatment is less effective in producing long-term health outcomes. Kennedy has [championed](#) the creation of a network of "hundreds of healing farms" for people with SUD and people experiencing behavioral health challenges. This approach has raised concern among advocates and experts because it supplants proven, evidence-based treatments and echoes dark histories of institutionalization.

July 25: Even after reinstating staff to the CDC Division, political appointees under Kennedy's leadership continued to wind down the entire Division of HIV Prevention (DHP), sharing with staff at the Division in meetings that the goal moving forward would be to "preserve the legacy" of DHP and work to develop strategies for its "thoughtful transition" for "dignified closure." Staff have reported being moved from their usual public health work. **That same day**, Senate Republicans were forced to [write](#) the Office of Management and Budget urging the Administration and Kennedy to release the billions of NIH research dollars they had withheld, acknowledging that "withholding or suspending these funds would jeopardize [the] trust [in NIH] and hinder progress on critical health challenges facing our nation."

July 26: Kennedy [attended the National Governors Association](#) summer meeting. During a Fireside Chat with Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, Kennedy falsely [repeated](#) the claim that the use of aluminum adjuvants in vaccines is leading to an increase in food allergies. Additionally,

Kennedy [claimed](#) that “no other country” administers the Hepatitis B vaccine to infants as soon as the United States does after birth. This is incorrect, and the WHO [recommends](#) infants receive their first dose “as soon as possible after birth, preferably within 24 hours” as infants can contract the illness from mothers who have contracted Hepatitis B.

July 27: The American Medical Association expressed its “deep concern” related to the reporting that Kennedy plans to remove all members of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, a forceful rebuke of Kennedy’s plans to convert and use advisory panels for his own political and ideological gain.

July 28: Kennedy [announced on social media](#) that the VICP “is broken” and shared that he would “not allow the VICP to continue to ignore its mandate and fail its mission of quickly and fairly compensating vaccine-injured individuals.” VICP is the nation’s compensation system for people harmed by vaccines. Kennedy’s fixation on the panel is alarming because of his vaccine skepticism. Further, Kennedy’s family is involved in ongoing vaccine litigation, and changes to the VICP program could [directly financially benefit his immediate family and close allies](#). Kennedy’s actions follow the \$250,000 [contract](#) awarded to Brueckner Spitler Shelts PLC, where [HHS staffer](#) and anti-vaccine lawyer Andrew Downing was employed.

July 29: Kennedy [echoed his baseless claim](#) that former ACIP members had conflicts of interest, saying in an interview with Chris Cuomo that “there are people on that panel, for the first time in history, that don’t have conflicts of interest, that are not making money by voting themselves rich.” This is not the first time Kennedy impugned the body’s credibility. **That same day**, the White House Office of Management and Budget halted payments from the NIH to researchers around the country, according to an internal memo sent to center directors at NIH.

July 30: Kennedy and his new sham ACIP panel are, again, [lambasted by former members](#). In their *New England Journal of Medicine* commentary, the ousted ACIP committee members described that the United States needs an “alternative to the Committee...quickly” and detailed specific steps that should be taken to maintain sound vaccine policy in the United States. They made it clear that, in its current form, ACIP is no longer the nation’s premier advisory committee on vaccine safety. **That same day**, the Administration reversed course on its latest halt of NIH research dollars, yet another roller coaster reversal reflecting the utter chaos and instability both NIH and HHS – under Kennedy’s leadership – have caused. **That same day**, on the 60th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid, every Senate Democrat cosponsored legislation to repeal the more than \$1 trillion in health care cuts in the Republican budget bill and permanently extend enhanced premium tax credits that keep ACA plan premiums affordable for working and middle-class families.

July 31: Kennedy [excluded major medical groups](#) – including AAP, the American Medical Association, and the American College of Physicians – from a forthcoming ACIP meeting. Historically, representatives from these groups had participated in ACIP meetings as

independent, non-voting experts. **That same day**, new [CDC data showed](#) that vaccination rates among kindergartners decreased in the 2024-2025 school year compared to the previous year. **That same day**, Trump asked Big Pharma to [pinky-promise to lower drug prices to align with international drug prices](#), rather than delivering real relief for millions of Americans. Trump and Kennedy talk a big game about standing up to Big Pharma, but have yet to secure a single reform to meaningfully lower the cost of prescription drugs for taxpayers and American families. Meanwhile, as part of the Republicans' budget bill, Trump [handed billions in bailouts to drug companies that make the world's top-selling cancer drugs](#) by delaying or exempting these life-saving medications from Medicare drug price negotiations. **That same day**, [North Carolina's Department of Insurance](#) released 2026 proposed ACA rates with drastic spikes attributed to the expiration of ACA tax credits, the harmful policies in the ACA rule finalized by HHS and CMS, and the damaging effects of the republican reconciliation bill.

Aug. 1: Kennedy and HHS eliminated a policy that encouraged hospitals to report health care worker vaccination rates, further undermining trust in the importance of vaccines to keep staff and patients in health care settings safe. ACIP recommends that all health care personnel receive an annual flu vaccination to reduce influenza-related morbidity and mortality among staff and their patients. **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, OMB and HHS [blocked funding to a range of CDC public health programs](#), including those related to preventing gun injuries and deaths, tobacco use, and youth violence. **That same day**, Kennedy [gave an interview to Fox News](#) where he discussed the reinstatement of the Presidential Fitness Test for children and connected fitness tests to the fall of the Roman Empire. In response to a question about whether Presidential Fitness Tests are humiliating for children and instigate bullying, Kennedy said, "It may, at some times, involve embarrassment. That's part of life."

Aug. 2: In [multiple](#) social media [posts](#), Kennedy echoed lies about thimerosal and railed against the VICP, the nation's compensation system for people harmed by vaccines. Kennedy's fixation on the panel is alarming because of his vaccine skepticism. Further, Kennedy's family is involved in ongoing vaccine litigation, and changes to the VICP program could [directly financially benefit his immediate family and close allies](#).

Aug. 3: Kennedy's crony CMS Director Dr. Oz [bragged](#) about the Republican budget bill, which [CBO estimated](#) would rip health insurance away from over 15 million Americans enrolled in Medicaid and the ACA marketplaces. In the interview, Dr. Oz suggested that people enrolled in Medicaid would be able to comply with the red tape of the new so-called work requirements by simply logging their hours on an app. He also suggested that people who have SUD would log themselves as having a SUD in the same app to "have some mechanism to report back" and access an exception. Eligible Americans are already at risk of erroneously being denied coverage due to eligibility systems plagued by errors. Dr. Oz's imaginary solution that DOGE will build an app that allows people to seamlessly comply with so-called "work requirements" to access the health care benefits they need to be healthy is a fantasy.

Aug. 4: Under Kennedy's leadership, access to critical health care services has eroded nationally. In Louisiana, [it was reported that the state's two Planned Parenthood](#) clinics will be closing. The facilities provided care to 18,000 patients last year. **That same day**, Kennedy irresponsibly [posted on social media](#) sowing distrust in the organ transplant system mentioning, "organ harvesting while patients still showed signs of life" and mischaracterizing how the organ transplant system works.

Aug. 5: Under Kennedy's leadership, NIH illegally canceled and reduced previously awarded grants, according to [a new decision by the independent, non-partisan government watchdog GAO](#). The elimination of billions of dollars in NIH funding wrecked the nation's medical research system and drastically set back lifesaving research efforts. **That same day**, Kennedy [announced](#) the cancellation of 22 mRNA vaccine development projects, as part of Kennedy's broader anti-vaccine crusade and his specific fixation on attacking mRNA technology – the same cutting-edge technology that produced the COVID-19 vaccine in record time and helped enable a return to normalcy.

Aug. 6: *The Washington Post* Editorial Board [decried](#) Kennedy's decision to cancel \$500 million in mRNA research grants, calling his defunding "perhaps the greatest harm that [Kennedy] might inflict on the nation with his anti-vaccine ideology." The Editorial Board stated that Kennedy's "resistance against mRNA vaccines is without evidence." The Editorial Board also highlighted the success of Trump's Operation Warp Speed, which Kennedy has routinely bashed. On X, Kennedy [wrote that](#) "President Trump has a weakness for swamp creatures, especially corporate monopolies, their lobbyists, and their money...[and] fail[ed] to recognize how ineffective his warp speed vaccine is." Kennedy also [posted](#) a "Trump Fauci 2024" t-shirt. **That same day**, an [analysis of ACA premium increases](#) in all 50 states was released, showing massive premium spikes across the country attributed to factors including the Republicans' refusal to extend ACA tax credits, health care inflation, and the damaging effects of tariffs.

Aug. 7: On Trump's 200th day in office, the White House [celebrated](#) the passage of the Republican budget bill. The press release neglected to mention that the law included the largest health care cuts in history, which were stewarded through Congress under Kennedy's leadership. [CBO estimated](#) that the bill would rip health insurance away from over 15 million Americans across the Medicaid program and ACA Marketplaces.

Aug. 8: Under Kennedy's leadership, dozens of hospitals and health systems are cutting jobs across the country amid financial and operational challenges, as [detailed in updated reporting](#). Health care providers nationwide are bracing for more than \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and the ACA, already weighing difficult decisions that will result in job loss, service line reductions, and facility closures as rates of uncompensated care skyrocket and state Medicaid programs slash payment rates. **That same day**, an individual seeking medical care at the renowned NIH Clinical Center – where patients are invited to seek care when their diagnoses align with ongoing research areas – was [detained by ICE](#). **That same day**, a gunman opened fire at the CDC's

headquarters in Atlanta, killing a police officer and shooting hundreds of bullets into buildings on campus, leaving terrified CDC employees, and nearly 100 children at the CDC's childcare center sheltering in place for hours. According to reporting, many staff on the CDC campus received [paltry communication](#) from campus security or leadership to alert them of the ongoing threat. **That same day**, just hours before the shooting, Dr. Robert Malone, who Kennedy recently appointed to the ACIP, uploaded a post to his personal [blog](#) with an image of a revolver loaded with a single bullet and the words "Five out of six scientists have proven that Russian roulette is harmless," promoting the same violent rhetoric towards scientists and public health officials that officials say contributed to the attack.

Aug. 9: Kennedy's anti-vaccine crony Vinay Prasad [returned](#) to head the CBER. During Prasad's first stint in charge of CBER, he oversaw the limiting of the COVID-19 vaccines and declined to approve new therapies for muscular dystrophy and advanced forms of melanoma. Prasad had been forced out as a result of MAGA infighting, rather than a rejection of his anti-science posture.

Aug. 10: Kennedy made [offensive comments](#) in a radio interview that stigmatized people who receive food assistance and other government services. The interview came just one month after Republicans gutted food assistance and Medicaid services as part of the Republican budget bill.

Aug. 11: Kennedy was [condemned](#) for his weak response to the recent shooting at the CDC's headquarters in Atlanta that resulted in the death of a police officer. The gunman [reportedly believed](#) that the COVID-19 vaccine had made him sick; this echoes the type of vaccine misinformation that Kennedy regularly disseminates. Kennedy's statements on social media lacked any mention of the misinformation on COVID-19 vaccines that motivated the shooter. **That same day**, in an interview, Kennedy again pushed the very rhetoric that helped to spur the shooting, saying "public health agencies have not been honest" and "trusting the experts is not a feature of science and democracy, it's a feature of totalitarianism and of religion." **That same day**, a leading medical journal [rejected](#) Kennedy's request that the journal retract a large study it published in July that found that [aluminum ingredients in vaccines do not increase health risks for children](#). **That same day**, [CBO released updated analyses](#) affirming the distributional effects of the Republicans' budget bill. Trump's tax handouts for the ultra-wealthy and big corporations, paid for with more than \$1 trillion in cuts to Americans' health care and food assistance, will make the wealthiest Americans better off and the lowest-income Americans worse off.

Aug. 12: The release of the MAHA Commission's second report was [delayed](#). The report's deadline was August 12, per an EO, but an HHS spokesperson stated that the "report will be unveiled to the public shortly thereafter as we coordinate the schedules," calling into question Kennedy's purported commitment to radical transparency. The Commission's first report was riddled with errors, including [made-up citations and misrepresentations of scientific findings](#). **That same day**, HHS and CDC leadership held an "all-hands" staff meeting days after the shooting, vaguely telling staff, "We know that misinformation can be dangerous," but still

refusing to explicitly condemn vaccine misinformation or the rhetoric from Kennedy that fueled hostility towards public health officials. Kennedy similarly has refused to address his own past comments that disparaged the CDC or that spread distrust in vaccines and public health officials.

Aug. 13: Under Kennedy's leadership, the FDA [signaled](#) that it might not renew the emergency use authorization for Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children under age five, leaving children with no available shot against the virus. The deliberations are not related to the "safety and efficacy of the shot," and are likely due to the fact that the shot uses mRNA technology.

Aug. 14: Under Kennedy's leadership, HHS announced that it was [re-forming](#) the Task Force on Safer Childhood Vaccines, just weeks after Kennedy's former organization, the Children's Health Defense, sued him for failing to establish such a [taskforce](#). **That same day**, one of Kennedy's appointed ACIP members, Dr. Robert Malone published a [blog](#) accusing a Member of Congress of "intimidation" after a Senate subcommittee sent a letter to HHS highlighting the physician's violent and threatening rhetoric towards public health officials as one more example of how he, and the other individuals appointed by Kennedy, are deeply unqualified and dangerous. Congress has [broad](#) oversight authority, and Kennedy's appointed cronies are not beyond Congressional reproach or oversight efforts.

Aug. 15: Kennedy failed to respond to Ranking Member Wyden's [inquiry](#) regarding the firing of the entire ACIP panel and their replacement with vaccine deniers, undermining Kennedy's purported commitment to "radical transparency." The response was due on July 8.

Aug. 16: Passed by Congress without a single Republican vote, *The Inflation Reduction Act* was signed into law three years ago today, allowing Medicare to negotiate the price of prescription drugs for the first time in history. [Through an EO issued in April 2025](#), the Trump Administration endorsed Big Pharma's top Congressional ask to weaken the law by delaying Medicare drug price negotiations on high-cost prescription drugs by years. Trump and Kennedy delivered for Big Pharma, in part, with the passage of the Republican budget bill, which delays or exempts the world's top-selling cancer drugs from Medicare drug price negotiations. This policy denies seniors on Medicare with cancer urgently needed relief on the price of life-saving medications.

Aug. 17: Widespread reporting continues on the immediate ramifications of the passage of the Republicans' budget bill, including harms resulting from more than \$900 billion in Medicaid cuts. Since the bill was passed, hospital, nursing home and community health center closures, service line reductions, job loss, proposed local tax increases, as well as other challenges have been reported in [California](#), [Colorado](#), [Florida](#), [Indiana](#), [Iowa](#), [Kansas](#), [Kentucky](#), [Maine](#), [Minnesota](#), [New Hampshire](#), [New York](#), [North Dakota](#), [Oregon](#), [Utah](#), and [Vermont](#), with ore reports of challenges daily. These operational challenges will impact everyone's access to local health care, not just people who receive their health insurance through Medicaid and the ACA, and will increase out-of-pocket health care costs for all populations.

Aug. 18: More than a week after the tragic shooting at the CDC headquarters, which had been instigated [in part](#) by Kennedy's false claims about the COVID-19 vaccine, employees returned to the CDC campus. Windows still contained bullet holes, and there was broken glass on the carpet – yet another sign that HHS and CDC leadership continue in their failure to appropriately respond to the incident, and failure to ensure that staff feel [safe in the workplace](#). **That same day**, a new [study](#) revealed that the number of financial conflicts of interest (COI) that members of ACIP and other vaccine advisory committees declined substantially from 2000 through 2024, debunking Kennedy's repeated false claim that 97 percent of ACIP members have COIs.

Aug. 19: Kennedy [accused](#) AAP of engaging in a “pay-to-play scheme to promote commercial ambitions of AAP's Big Pharma benefactors” after the organization issued COVID-19 vaccine guidance that contradicted Kennedy's. In the same post, Kennedy threatened that doctors who choose to give the COVID-19 vaccine to children six months and older who are immunocompromised, in accordance with AAP's recommendation, would not be shielded from liability.

Aug. 20: Over 750 [federal health employees, including hundreds of current HHS staff](#), wrote to Kennedy imploring him to “stop spreading inaccurate health information” and accusing him of “sowing public mistrust by questioning the integrity and morality of CDC's workforce.” They suggested that Kennedy's actions have worsened Americans' health and safety and are, at least in part, responsible for the recent shooting at the CDC.

Aug. 21: Under Kennedy's leadership, access to critical health care services has eroded nationally. Employers [are](#) reducing benefits and making other changes to their insurance offerings to offset the anticipated increase in health care costs next year, translating to a reduction in services for Americans. **That same day**, the CDC permanently fired [600 employees](#), just two weeks after a gunman opened fire at the CDC's headquarters, exacerbating the trauma already experienced by CDC staff, and impacting programs that track violence against children, prevent rape, child abuse, and teen dating violence. **That same day**, the *New York Times* published an [op-ed](#) from a mother in North Carolina, Rachel, expressing deep concern for her son, David, who relies on the state's Medicaid home and community-based services program. Rachel wrote, “The White House insists that the passage of President Trump's domestic policy bill won't affect programs like David's. I know better... Before the passage of the domestic policy law, when you paid your federal taxes, a fraction of your money helped support children like David through Medicaid. This ensured that their lives remained a communal responsibility and collective effort, reinforcing their value. That moral imperative has now disappeared. Children's lives are quite literally on the line.”

Aug. 22: Under Kennedy's leadership, a known vaccine skeptic was appointed to lead a task force to review the COVID-19 vaccine. The individual – who is not a doctor – described the COVID-19 vaccine as “the most failing medical product in the history of medical products.” The

vaccine ended a global pandemic and [saved an estimated 140,000 lives](#) in the U.S., as of May 2021. During Trump's first term, an estimated 570,000 Americans died of COVID-19 in that same time period. A *JAMA* study confirms the U.S. [experienced the highest mortality rates from COVID-19 compared to all peer countries](#), though these disparities were alleviated in states with high vaccination rates. **That same day**, a federal judge granted a [preliminary injunction](#) delaying the effective date of certain provisions of the harmful ACA rule finalized by HHS and CMS. The plaintiffs in this case argue that the rule will undermine core protections of the ACA, raise costs, weaken coverage, and cut off access for eligible people.

Aug. 23: This day marked the [one-year anniversary of Kennedy suspending his presidential campaign](#) and endorsing Trump. Kennedy has [staffed](#) his HHS team with his former campaign staffers and cronies, including his Principal Deputy Chief of Staff [Stefanie Spear](#).

Aug. 24: Medicaid is the single largest payer of behavioral health services in the U.S. [Reporting](#) since the passage of the Republicans' budget bill highlights how more than \$900 billion in Medicaid cuts will significantly worsen challenges for patients with behavioral health conditions and their families, reducing access to services all across the care continuum for mental health conditions and SUD. Prior to the bill's passage, there were some promising developments in treating behavioral health conditions - the [overdose rate](#) across the country was finally starting to decline, though the nation's mental health system needed vast improvement. Republicans' budget bill will strike a deadly blow in communities nationwide.

Aug. 25: According to [reports](#), CDC Director Susan Monarez was called into a meeting with Kennedy and one of his crony senior staffers, Stefanie Spear, where the two attempted to pressure her to resign because she "refused to rubber-stamp unscientific, reckless directives and fire dedicated health experts." Monarez refused to resign. **That same day**, a judge [ruled](#) that Maine Family Planning, a reproductive health care provider in Maine that operates 18 clinics, can be stripped of its Medicaid funding under the Republican budget bill. Under Kennedy's leadership, access to critical health care services has eroded nationally. MFP clinics provide essential health care, including cancer screenings, sexually transmitted infection (STI) screenings, contraceptive care, annual checkups, and other reproductive health care services.

Aug. 26: At a Cabinet Meeting, Kennedy and Trump [further](#) assailed and stigmatized people with autism. Trump stated that "autism is such a tremendous horror show."

Aug. 27: The FDA approved updated Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax COVID-19 vaccines with increased restrictions, curtailing access to safe and effective vaccines for the general public and at-risk populations. The [new restrictions](#) will allow insurance companies to deny coverage for "off-label use," threaten access to vaccination in pharmacies, create new barriers for patients to demonstrate they are eligible for vaccination pursuant to the FDA label, and further sow confusion and fan the flames of vaccine hesitancy. **That same day**, Trump and Kennedy fired CDC Director Susan Monarez, just 30 days after her confirmation, for "[running afoul](#)" of

Kennedy by objecting to his ACIP coup and refusing to sign off on changes to vaccine [scheduling](#) or to fire scientists at the CDC. **That same day**, four top officials at the CDC also submitted their resignations because of the chaos at CDC, including Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, Director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Dr. Daniel Jernigan; and CDC Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Debra Houry.

Aug. 28: HHS [announced](#) that Kennedy's sham ACIP panel would reconvene in September. Kennedy's anti-vaccine and anti-science ACIP members are likely to use this meeting to further erode vaccine access. **That same day**, Trump appointed Deputy Secretary Jim O'Neill as the new acting CDC Director to replace Dr. Monarez, paving the way for him to have direct influence over ACIP recommendations. O'Neill has no medical or public health background or training and is entirely unqualified to assume this role. **That same day**, without evidence, [Kennedy appeared on Fox News](#) and claimed, without evidence, that certain antidepressants could have contributed to a mass shooting at a Minneapolis church that killed two children and injured seventeen. This is yet another disproven, dangerous conspiracy theory that Kennedy continues to repeat, despite well-established research on the safety of antidepressants.

Aug. 29: Kennedy [memorialized his recent trip to Texas](#) and celebrated the \$50 billion rural health slush fund included in Republicans' budget bill, falsely claiming these funds will sustain rural hospitals, nursing homes, and other essential health care providers amid the legislation's more than \$1 trillion in health care cuts. This paltry fund effectively puts a band-aid on an amputation, and was seemingly established to secure votes from Republican members of Congress quietly concerned about the impact of Medicaid cuts in their communities. While funds have not yet been disseminated as directed in the law, [some Republican members of Congress have already issued press releases](#) celebrating their states' receipt of rural health slush funds. **That same day**, whistleblowers reported that under Kennedy's leadership, ORR had [finalized plans](#) to deport nearly 700 Guatemalan children in government custody, who are awaiting reunification with family members or placement with sponsors. These heartless plans are Kennedy's latest attempt to disappear vulnerable unaccompanied children, violating ORR's mandate to prioritize the welfare of children in their care.

Aug. 30: [Kennedy's chaotic mismanagement of HHS reverberates throughout the country](#) as major pharmacy chains, like CVS and Walgreens, suspend administration of COVID-19 vaccines in sixteen states with laws that require express recommendations from ACIP to provide the vaccine, including Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia, along with the District of Columbia. COVID-19 vaccine access is curtailed nationwide, [including for those with chronic conditions](#) who need the vaccine to stay safe and healthy as the Fall respiratory virus season begins.

Aug. 31: Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, who ran the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases and resigned following Kennedy's high-profile firing of Director Monarez, [reflected](#) that he "only see[s] harm coming" at HHS under Kennedy's leadership, especially as Kennedy implements his "ideological direction where they want to see the undoing of vaccination." **That same day**, children in ORR custody were awoken in the middle of the night, loaded onto planes destined for deportation to Guatemala, and sat waiting on the tarmac for hours. A federal judge [blocked](#) the Trump Administration's latest effort to ignore its statutory duty to provide for the care and custody of unaccompanied children. This chaotic chain of events is a further example of how Kennedy and the Trump Administration are cruelly further traumatizing exceedingly vulnerable children.

Sept. 1: Trump posted a [scattered, confusing message on Truth Social](#), inviting prescription drug manufacturers to share data on why the COVID-19 vaccine is a "miracle that saved Millions of lives," while acknowledging "Others disagree!" which seemingly includes Kennedy. At the end of Trump's first term, [Trump proclaimed](#), "We're here to discuss a monumental national achievement. From the instant the coronavirus invaded our shores, we raced into action to develop a safe and effective vaccine at breakneck speed. It would normally take five years, six years, seven years, or even more. In order to achieve this goal, we harnessed the full power of government, the genius of American scientists, and the might of American industry to save millions and millions of lives all over the world." Notably, during Trump's second term, Kennedy has taken multiple actions to significantly curtail access to this "monumental national achievement" for nearly all Americans. **That same day**, every CDC Director who served from 1977 to 2024, representing more than 100 years of service, [wrote an op-ed in the New York Times](#) warning the public and members of Congress that Kennedy's actions endanger Americans' health. **That same day**, Brett Giroir, Assistant Secretary for Health and Acting Food and Drug Administration Commissioner during Trump's first term, wrote an [op-ed in USA Today](#) disparaging Kennedy's "false assertions" about mRNA technology and his decision to shut down federal funding for mRNA vaccine-related research, noting "The United States recently took a dangerous step backward in its pursuit of lifesaving cures and pandemic preparedness."

Sept. 2: Kennedy [published](#) an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* framing the mass CDC firings as an ideological effort and ignoring the mass destabilizing impact that his attacks have had on public health. **That same day**, the impact of the NIH Clinical Center's loss of critical staff and ongoing hiring freeze put the facility at risk of losing its accreditation. **That same day**, under Kennedy's leadership, it was [reported](#) that Dr. Paul Offit, an internationally recognized pediatrician and vaccinologist, was removed from the VRBPAC.

Sept. 3: Kennedy's VICP crony Andrew Downing is still listed on the official HHS Staff Directory as Counselor to the Secretary. Like Kennedy, Downing received financial compensation for Merck-related litigation. Additionally, Downing's law firm, Brueckner Spitler Shelts PLC, [received a \\$250,000](#) contract related to VICP earlier in the year. In a motion filed in

COSTS, CHAOS, AND CORRUPTION:
203 DAYS OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.'S DISASTROUS LEADERSHIP

December 2024, a client of Downing's [explained](#) that Downing was discontinuing practice in order to accept an appointment to a position in government. Downing was identified by Senate Finance Committee Minority Staff as a Counselor to the Secretary. However, it remains unclear *when* Downing joined the Trump Administration and *what* his duties are.

Sept. 4: Kennedy returned to the Senate Finance Committee to be held to account for 203 days of horrors at HHS under his leadership.

Part 2: Costs, Chaos, and Corruption Case Studies

This section sets out three narrative case studies that illustrate the cross-cutting harm that Kennedy has wrought as Secretary. His actions are increasing Americans' health care costs, causing chaos within HHS and across the country, and furthering the Trump Administration's endless stream of corruption. To illustrate each of these points, the report examines the Republican budget bill, the dismantling of HHS, and Kennedy's anti-vaccine crusade, which is inherently tied to his own personal gain.

Case Study #1 – The High Costs of the Republican Budget Bill

Kennedy helped pass the Republican budget bill through Congress and into law, enacting the largest health care cuts in history and massively adding to the national debt. Kennedy's purported North Star is to 'Make America Healthy Again,' but the law is diametrically opposed to that goal. The Republican budget bill will cost Americans their lives and their health coverage, and it will hurt their wallets.

The reconciliation package will have disastrous impacts on the health and wellbeing of the American people. The bill will literally kill people: one analysis found that the law is projected to result in over [51,000 preventable deaths](#) per year. The bill will strip people of health coverage: CBO's independent, nonpartisan analysis found that it will terminate health care coverage for [more than 15 million people](#). The bill will also decimate rural America: according to researchers, over [330 rural hospitals](#) and 579 nursing homes across the country are at high risk of closure. Additionally, hundreds more rural hospitals will be financially squeezed, putting labor and delivery services, pediatric care, mental health services, and other local essential health care at risk.

The bill is an assault on women's health care: by defunding Planned Parenthood, the bill has closed the doors of health centers and, in total, puts [200 health centers](#) at risk of closure. [60 percent](#) of these Planned Parenthood clinics are located in underserved or rural areas, stripping more than [one million patients](#) of access to reproductive health care, cancer screening, and life-saving services. This attack also amounts to a backdoor abortion ban, as clinics will close in states where abortion is legally protected.

Beyond the [trillions](#) that the law will add to the national debt, hard-working Americans will feel the impact on their wallets when they seek health care services. Beginning in January 2025, [more than 20 million working Americans](#) who buy their own health insurance on ACA Marketplaces will pay higher premiums, with the average premium increase projected to be [\\$700](#) per year. For some families, monthly premiums will [double](#). When Medicaid enrollees seek health care, they will now be required to pay up to \$35 in cost-sharing in many cases.

With the requirement that all states implement so-called “work requirements” and other complex verification and re-verification hurdles, Americans will be forced to endure bureaucratic torture just to get access to the health insurance they are eligible for. State experiments with red tape requirements in Medicaid have failed – these requirements are costly to implement and, too often, strip eligible individuals of coverage. Medicaid enrollees will also be forced to undergo reenrollment reviews every six months, leading to additional paperwork hurdles for sustaining health care coverage. Under Kennedy’s leadership, similar red tape hurdles were added to ACA Marketplace plans in June and will be expanded on through policies in Republicans’ budget bill. Marketplace enrollees who are eligible for coverage will now face additional enrollment and re-enrollment requirements paired with a shortened application window designed to make it harder for them to buy and keep their coverage.

The Republican budget bill is an all-out assault on Americans’ health and wellbeing. Kennedy cheered the package every step of the way and helped Trump make this costly legislation law.

In the lead-up to the Republican budget bill's consideration, Kennedy leveraged his platform in support of the package. He was the [lead author of an op-ed in the *New York Times*](#) that argued that taking away health coverage from Medicaid enrollees will promote work. In multiple Congressional hearings, Kennedy argued that Medicaid should only be available to “poor children,” “mothers,” and “the disabled.” The Republican budget bill reflects Kennedy’s draconian vision for health care in America.

In the wake of the law’s passage, Kennedy has continued to go to bat for the Republican budget bill. He has used his profile to distort public perception of the law. In a *Fox Business News* interview where he defended the disastrous bill, Kennedy spouted falsehoods. He [said](#), “[t]here’s no cuts on Medicaid. There is a – there’s a diminishment of the growth rate of Medicaid, which is bankrupting our country. And, by the way, the national debt is also a determinant—a social determinant—of health.”

The Republican budget bill is one of the costliest laws in American history, and Kennedy played an essential role in its enactment. The law will raise health care costs, reduce access to quality care, destabilize the entire health care system, and disproportionately harm children, people with disabilities, and seniors. With the Republican budget bill, Kennedy harmed the very people he claims to serve, costing Americans their lives, their health, and their wellbeing.

Case Study #2 – Sowing Chaos by Dismantling HHS

Kennedy's entire tenure at the helm of HHS has been defined by utter chaos. The fact that Kennedy, a man who spent a career peddling lies and conspiracy theories, would erode public trust and undermine public health systems was predictable. That is why a coalition of thousands of [doctors](#), scientists, advocates, [parents](#), and Members of Congress – including Ranking Member Wyden, Senate Finance Committee Democrats, and Senator Alsbrooks – sounded the alarm during Kennedy's confirmation process. As these experts and Senate Democrats noted then, even before stepping into office, Kennedy represented an immediate and irreparable threat to the health of Americans. That prediction came true, and Kennedy is taking steps each and every day to weaken the nation's public health infrastructure by firing and disrupting the work of the expert civil servants that keep Americans safe; politicizing and devastating medical research across the country; trafficking in cynicism and mistrust; and leaving a wake of chaos behind him. While there are innumerable examples of chaos and confusion at HHS under Kennedy's direction, this case study focuses on some of the more egregious and deleterious examples:

- Kennedy's reckless reduction in force and dismantling of HHS;
- Kennedy's intimidation and retaliation against scientists and leaders who do not align with his agenda, or dare to push back against his conspiracies, and;
- Kennedy's weaponization of science and destruction of our research institutions.

Reckless Reduction in Force:

Perhaps most chaotic during Kennedy's destructive tenure has been his systematic dismemberment of the very Department he is purporting to lead. In the spring, Kennedy helmed the mass firing of roughly 20,000 HHS employees without due process, functionally halting the work of countless teams, while collapsing core HHS functions into nonsensical new agencies, including a new "Administration for a Healthy America." According to the announcement, cuts would include at least 3,500 full-time employees at the FDA, 2,400 employees at the CDC, 1,200 employees at the NIH, and 300 employees at CMS. Additionally, Kennedy fired approximately 500 staffers at ACF in the April 1 wave of terminations, paralyzing HHS's ability to effectively operate its human services programs. Kennedy's plan to dismantle ACL and his dismissal of half of the staff that work on federal aging and disability programs at HHS will cause real harm to seniors and individuals with disabilities. In a [briefing](#) given by HHS to Congress in the spring, HHS staff confirmed that as of April 10, Kennedy had fired 8,419 employees, including an additional 123 staffers at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 400 staffers at the HRSA, 197 staffers at SAMHSA, and 516 staffers in the Office of the Secretary.

Under Kennedy's plan, between prior firings, early retirement offers, and the layoffs, the overall HHS workforce would be reduced to 62,000 full-time employees – an approximately 25 percent reduction. In addition to these staffing cuts, Kennedy announced the consolidation of operating

divisions, programs, and agencies in a massive reorganization, bringing HHS from 28 divisions and 10 regional offices down to 15 divisions and 5 regional offices.

Again, somehow Kennedy made this reduction in force even worse, by the sheer heartless and chaotic way he slashed staff and mismanaged the rollout. HHS failed to appropriately communicate with HHS staff about their status, instead locking employees out of their government accounts and technology without sufficient notice, leaving employees stretched in long lines outside their buildings, waiting to enter and find out if they still had a job. Days after being locked out, employees learned through their pay stubs that they had been placed on administrative leave, many not receiving official RIF notices until weeks later. According to these employees, the entire [process](#) was “humiliating and degrading.” What’s more, Kennedy attempted to push HHS staffers in Senior Executive Service (SES) positions out HHS by offering them [reassignments](#) to rural duty locations with the Indian Health Service (IHS) – positions that either did not actually exist, or that the SES staffers did not have the background or qualifications to fill, and insulting the critical work done by IHS in Indian Country. Some staffers who were terminated had their RIF notices rescinded. Others who received RIF notices were ordered to [return to work](#), though their jobs were still set to be terminated.

Ultimately, HHS has been paying the full salaries of thousands of employees – from court-ordered reinstated probationary employees, to employees placed on leave pending RIFs and litigation – while barring them from performing their duties, creating chaos for HHS programs and amounting to unprecedented government waste by Kennedy. Indeed, [reporting](#) has found that the Trump Administration has been paying about 154,000 employees not to work. During that process, employees were left in limbo, with little or incorrect guidance from HHS on supports, next steps, or benefits coverage.

Kennedy’s reckless RIF and reorganization comes at a time when measles is spreading in communities across the country, avian flu is proliferating throughout our livestock populations, families are experiencing a childcare availability and affordability crisis, and cities across the country are still reeling from opioid and fentanyl overdoses. Instead of showing leadership on these concurrent emergencies and fulfilling HHS’s mission, the Trump Administration has crippled the very teams and entire divisions that combat public health challenges, prevent disparities, and ensure that our families and children are safe.

Yet even after Kennedy’s first wave of dismissals, Kennedy himself admitted just days later that the indiscriminate, mass firings at HHS were a disaster and that “some of the cuts” had been a [mistake](#), seemingly unaware of the important work that many of these civil servants did every day. In testimony to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Kennedy said that more than 700 staff members from the CDC and 200 employees from the NIH who had been let go had since been brought back, “[because we were not able to perform our job](#).” One of the programs impacted in the first wave of firings was the CDC’s childhood lead program, which Kennedy admitted was a mistake. Another was the World Trade Center Health Program. When

Senator Andy Kim [asked](#) the Secretary in the Senate HELP Committee why the National Firefighter Cancer Registry was shut down, no longer allowing firefighters to enroll as a result of staffing cuts, Kennedy responded, “I don’t know about that,” making it crystal clear that Kennedy has no idea who he fired, or what those fired employees do.

Intimidation and Retaliation:

For the employees remaining at HHS, Kennedy made life “[a living hell](#)” for these dedicated civil servants. That much was made clear in the wake of the tragic shooting at CDC headquarters in Atlanta, after a gunman, spurred by the vaccine misinformation and violent rhetoric of Kennedy and his cronies, opened fire on the campus. Hundreds of CDC staffers wrote a public [letter](#) decrying Kennedy’s actions and “dangerous and deceitful statements and actions [that] have contributed to the harassment and violence experienced by CDC staff.” Their letter makes clear: Kennedy’s work to sow distrust in public health, spur vaccine disinformation and hostility against science has made public health officials across the country less safe, and undermines their ability to protect Americans. One staffer put it [simply](#): “We have just been beat down so much that we’ve lost motivation to go above and beyond for our work and for our country.”

For those who still show up to serve their country every day, the sheer chaos, uncertainty, fear of retaliation, and politicization of science caused by Kennedy has created a toxic and untenable environment. Such chaos – and Kennedy’s own targeted bullying of career scientists who do not align with his own scurrilous agenda – have led to the high-profile departures of a multitude of high-ranking career and even political leaders across the Department. Kennedy has gone after esteemed public health officials with decades of public service – both by firing them outright or pushing them out – from Dr. Peter Marks, the FDA’s top vaccine scientist, to Dr. Susan Monarez, the Director of the CDC. Other top leaders and subject matter experts with years of dedicated service from the NIH, FDA, CDC, and CMS have been leaving in droves, including Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, Director of the CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Dr. Daskalakis wrote in his scathing resignation [letter](#) that he is “unable to serve in an environment that treats CDC as a tool to generate policies and materials that do not reflect scientific reality and are designed to hurt rather than to improve the public’s health.” This echoes the sentiment in Dr. Mark’s resignation [letter](#): “it has become clear that truth and transparency are not desired by the Secretary, but rather he wishes subservient confirmation of his misinformation and lies.”

The events of the week of August 25 between Kennedy and CDC leadership perhaps best embody the sheer chaos that has defined his rocky leadership at HHS. A mere 30 days after being confirmed by the Senate, HHS [tweeted](#) that Dr. Monarez was no longer leading the agency. Further reporting revealed that after Dr. Monarez refused to, in her lawyer’s words, “rubber-stamp unscientific, reckless directives and fire dedicated health experts,” Kennedy pressured her to resign. She refused and was officially fired late on the evening of August 27. Trump then appointed Kennedy’s hand-selected yes-man, Deputy Secretary Jim O’Neill, paving

the way for him to disregard science and push his own policy changes and viewpoints related to vaccine scheduling at ACIP.

Pushing out scientists and experts to make room for his cronies and anti-vaccine associates is now common practice for Kennedy, who, in June, unceremoniously fired all 17 members of ACIP via [tweet](#). Kennedy replaced these members with 8 new members rife with dubious credentials, conflicts of interest, and extensive histories in vaccine misinformation.

Weaponizing Science and Dismantling Research:

The chaos sown by Kennedy amidst HHS, its staff, and its programs has been mirrored by his work to systematically politicize and dismantle the strength of the nation's world-class research infrastructure. Kennedy has made it his mission to weaponize science by slashing and delaying billions of dollars of critical grant funding, settling old scores by gutting research that he does not personally agree with. Specifically, Kennedy has used a machete to obliterate nearly all federal research and clinical trials related to vaccines, including research and trials designed to combat vaccine hesitancy, research on vaccines that will combat and prevent chronic – and even terminal – illnesses, including cancers, and the development of mRNA vaccines to counter viruses, including influenza and bird flu.

In May, Kennedy [cancelled](#) a \$600 million contract with Moderna to develop a bird flu vaccine. And in August, Kennedy and HHS [announced](#) that it was cancelling \$500 million in mRNA vaccine contracts, bringing to life his wildly incorrect and conspiratorial statements that the COVID-19 vaccine was the “deadliest vaccine ever made” and that mRNA vaccines “don't perform well.” With these actions alone, Kennedy singlehandedly caused the country's preparedness and national security against future aggressive pathogens and biological threats to backslide, sowing chaos for public health officials working to save lives.

These were also just the latest examples of Kennedy viewing taxpayer dollars as a personal slush fund to promote his warped and non-science-based theories and punish projects and researchers that do not conform to his agenda. From the start of his tenure, HHS has illegally withheld billions in grant funding for research. As the *New York Times* [reported](#), under Kennedy's direction, the NIH upended over 2,500 projects, ending 1,389 awards and delaying funding to an additional 1,000 projects. The NIH suspended grants to universities across the country – in both red and blue states – supporting a broad range of research studies aimed at reducing health disparities, advancing mental health and HIV prevention, and addressing substance use. Research on [chronic diseases](#), including cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, kidney disease, heart disease, colitis, and so many more has fallen victim to terminations and delays in Kennedy's warpath against science. All of these cuts and delays threaten the search for cures, better therapeutics, and better care, putting the health of the American public at risk.

Kennedy is also targeting the very pipeline that helps to encourage scientists to join the field – the very programs that help to make the United States a competitive powerhouse in research. This spring, the NIH terminated more than 350 grants meant to support students, early-career scientists, and underrepresented researchers.

At his core, Kennedy represents an existential threat to the existence of the NIH. He supports the President's proposal to slash the NIH's total budget by about \$18 billion, or almost 40 percent, which would decimate its ability to continue to function, ending its prominence as a global leader. He has left the NIH Clinical Center – the crown jewel of the NIH, focused entirely on clinical research – in shambles, terminating or delaying hundreds of clinical trials, and working with a skeleton staff after mass firings. Kennedy has paused or delayed funding for months to hundreds of clinical trials, and outright terminated hundreds more. Many of the terminated trials focused on testing vaccines, combating HIV and HPV, harm reduction strategies to reduce SUDs, and violence and sexual assault prevention. Others focused on diabetes, kidney transplants, brain health, sickle cell treatments, and cochlear implants. Kennedy's funding delays on research have wide-ranging health implications for all Americans.

Kennedy has directed the NIH Director to slash his staff, pushing out or firing 5,000 critical scientists, researchers, providers, and support staff who allow it to do its mission-critical work to further health and science. Yet, Kennedy has denied that he has crippled the agency by firing scientists, telling Congress, "We have not fired any working scientists." Kennedy doubled down on this lie after Senator Alsobrooks pushed back on the comments in the Senate HELP Committee, and then attempted to overtalk and obfuscate. Unsurprisingly, Kennedy was again fact-checked by numerous [outlets](#) and experts, including in a report by ProPublica that [found](#) more than 3,000 scientists and public health specialists have been pushed out or directly fired from HHS since January. More specifically, more than 1,050 scientists, physicians, and public health specialists have left or were pushed out from the CDC alone, many of whom were involved in critical work of disease surveillance, leaving Americans vulnerable.

Despite Kennedy being a repeated and shameless liar – even to Congress – the truth has been laid bare: Americans' health is at risk because of Secretary Kennedy and his extensive efforts to dismantle HHS.

Case Study #3 – Corruption Drives Kennedy's Anti-Vaccine Crusade

It was never a question of whether Kennedy would use the office of Secretary to undermine vaccine confidence and access, but the extent to which he has spread vaccine misinformation and eroded access in his 203 days demonstrates that the worst-case scenario is coming to fruition.

Vaccines are arguably the greatest public health innovation of all time. [One study](#) estimated that the World Health Organization's global vaccine efforts have averted 154 million deaths, including 146 million among children under age five, over the last 50 years. That translates to a remarkable [six lives saved every minute of every day of every year](#). Not only do vaccines save lives, they also prevent millions of people from suffering long-term effects of serious illnesses, which in turn saves money across the entire health care system. Without proper vaccination uptake, people die from vaccine-preventable diseases. The most severe risks are borne by infants, children, vulnerable seniors, and immunocompromised individuals.

Kennedy is an infamous [peddler](#) of anti-vaccine [conspiracies](#) and [lies](#). He has long asserted, and maintains, that vaccines are linked to autism, despite overwhelming scientific evidence refuting this claim. Further, Kennedy played a role in one of the deadliest measles outbreaks in recent history by traveling to Samoa to use the accidental, tragic deaths of two children to sow vaccine hesitancy. Ultimately, [more than 5,700 people contracted measles, and 83 people](#), mostly children, died. Kennedy has also made countless statements spreading vaccine misinformation and, consequently, sowing vaccine mistrust. He continued this trend throughout his confirmation process by undermining the integrity of ACIP, which used to be considered the nation's premier advisory committee on vaccine safety, and its membership.

Prior to Kennedy's takeover, ACIP held regular public meetings, reviewed scientific evidence, and made immunization recommendations for the general population. Based on ACIP's recommendations, the CDC sets vaccine schedules for children and adults. These vaccine recommendations are tied to health plan coverage and cost-sharing requirements, including for Senate Finance Committee jurisdiction programs like Medicare, Medicaid, ACA, and CHIP.

Since taking office, Kennedy has used ACIP as the launching pad for his vaccine coup, turning a vital safeguard for Americans' health and safety into a tool for political maneuvering. Just days after his confirmation, Kennedy [indefinitely postponed](#) the long-scheduled ACIP meeting without providing any rationale for this change. Then, in May, absent a Senate-confirmed CDC Director, Kennedy was [empowered](#) to personally review vaccine recommendations from an earlier ACIP meeting. In that role, Kennedy chose not to adopt ACIP's vote to recommend the RSV and meningitis vaccines for certain groups. Later that month, without input from ACIP, Kennedy – who is not a licensed medical professional – [removed the COVID-19 vaccine](#) from the recommended CDC schedule for pregnant women and some children.

In the summer, Kennedy's vaccine assault reached new heights. Kennedy fired the entire ACIP membership and replaced the panel with individuals aligned with his anti-science views. For example, one of Kennedy's ACIP appointees, Dr. Robert Malone, holds fringe views, has

overstated his contributions to mRNA vaccine technology, and has suggested that COVID-19 vaccines cause a form of AIDS. At the first meeting of Kennedy's new sham ACIP, Lyn Redwood, a leader in the anti-vaccine movement and the President Emerita of Children's Health Defense, an anti-vaccine organization Kennedy co-founded, presented misinformation. Following Redwood's presentation, the new ACIP appointees voted 5-1 recommending against any version of the well-tested, multi-dose flu vaccine containing thimerosal, which is already only used in limited instances.

During the same time period, Kennedy completely defunded research efforts into mRNA technology – the same cutting-edge technology that produced the COVID-19 vaccine in record time, saved thousands of lives, and helped enable a return to normalcy for millions nationally. This technology has the potential to slow the spread of disease and save more lives faster in the event of a future pandemic, such as an avian flu outbreak. He also appointed a known vaccine skeptic to lead a task force to review the COVID-19 vaccine. The individual – who is not a doctor – described the COVID-19 vaccine as “the most failing medical product in the history of medical products.” The FDA approved updated Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax COVID-19 vaccines with narrow labels, which will create significant access barriers for patients under 65 years old. Each of these decisions had a stark impact on individuals' ability to access life-saving vaccines across the country.

The week of August 25, Kennedy dramatically escalated his efforts to sideline anyone standing in the way of his anti-vaccine agenda. He attempted to fire newly confirmed CDC Director Susan Monarez, a microbiologist with significant expertise on vaccines. RFK reportedly demanded that Monarez: (1) fire career CDC scientists and center directors; and (2) approve vaccine recommendations from his refashioned ACIP, regardless of whether those recommendations are supported by scientific evidence. Monarez refused, and Kennedy announced she was fired shortly thereafter. After her firing, three senior CDC scientists [announced their resignations](#), with one of them noting: “I have never experienced such radical non-transparency, nor have I seen such unskilled manipulation of data to achieve a political end rather than the good of the American people.”

Kennedy's efforts to silence scientists, pervert government policy and data, and undermine vaccine confidence and access are not only immoral, but they constitute significant financial conflicts of interest. This personal corruption likely fuels Kennedy's anti-vaccine mission. For example, Kennedy has received roughly \$2,500,000 over the last three years, partly from his involvement with litigation against Merck related to its HPV vaccine, which has been proven to protect against numerous cancers. He could return to vaccine litigation after leaving his role as Secretary and leverage HHS policies, studies, and statements to advance his clients' cases against vaccine manufacturers. His decisions and statements as Secretary may also financially benefit his son, to whom he divested his existing interests in the cases he serviced as Wisner Baum.

Kennedy's cronies also stand to benefit financially from his anti-vaccine efforts. Two of the new sham ACIP appointees have served as paid expert witnesses in Kennedy's Merck litigation. These individuals could make decisions in their official ACIP capacity that directly benefit the Kennedy family in their ongoing involvement in that same litigation. Additionally, Kennedy hired Andrew Downing, who has made a career out of vaccine injury lawsuits, to begin "revolutionizing the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program," and awarded Downing's law firm a \$250,000 contract to support this effort. Upending VICP could lead to vaccine manufacturers exiting the market, and such exits could severely curb vaccine access across the country.

Kennedy's MAHA cronies' conflicts extend beyond the vaccine space. Calley Means, co-founder of Truemed, is a top adviser to Kennedy. Truemed helps people use their pre-tax dollars on wellness items and wearable technologies. Levels, co-founded by Calley's sister Casey, creates wearable technologies. She is also Trump's nominee for Surgeon General. Both Truemed and Levels – and, by extension, the Means siblings – would benefit financially from nationwide uptake of wearable devices, one of Kennedy's newest crusades.

Kennedy is systematically dismantling vaccine access to serve his personal, financial, and political interests, rather than improving the nation's public health. His moves erode decades of progress in disease prevention and put the lives of all Americans, especially children, people with disabilities, and the most vulnerable, at risk. Kennedy's value structure is clear: personal, political, and financial gain will always take precedent over public wellbeing and science.

Part 3: Kennedy's Nomination Lies

This section sets out some of the areas where Kennedy's actions are in direct conflict with sworn testimony and commitments he made to bipartisan Senate Finance Committee and HELP Committee members during his confirmation process.

Issue 1: ACIP

Background: ACIP has been considered the nation's premier advisory committee on vaccine safety. It holds regular public meetings, reviews scientific evidence, and makes immunization recommendations for the general population. Based on these recommendations, the CDC sets vaccine schedules for children and adults. These vaccine recommendations are tied to health plan coverage and cost-sharing requirements.

Kennedy's Statements:

- **Wyden QFR #173.** Will you seek to replace current ACIP committee members?
 - **Kennedy's 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.
- **U.S. Senate Finance Committee Hearing:**
 - **Kennedy gave the following misinformation,** "The ACIP panel and within CDC, I think 97 percent of the people on it had conflicts. I don't believe that that's right. I think we need to end those conflicts and make sure that scientists are doing unobstructed science."
 - **Kennedy** echoed similar misinformation in a recent *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, saying that "conflicts of interest persist. Most of ACIP's members have received financial funding from pharmaceutical companies."
- **U.S. Senate HELP Committee Hearing:**
 - In response to Senator Murray's question, **Kennedy said,** "I recommend that children follow the – the CDC schedule and I will support the CDC schedule when I get in there, if I'm fortunate enough to be confirmed."
 - Senator Cassidy said, "[p]romise that the FDA will not deprioritize or delay review and/or approval of new vaccines, and that vaccine review standards will not change from historical norms." In response, **Kennedy attested,** "Yes."

Kennedy's Actions: Kennedy fired all 17 ACIP members and, in their places, installed individuals who are unqualified, have serious conflicts of interest, and/or are outright vaccine alarmists.

The Human Harm: At the first ACIP meeting, the new appointees voted 5-1 recommending against any version of the well-tested, multi-dose flu vaccine containing thimerosal. The new ACIP appointees are well-positioned to remove additional vaccines from recommended

schedules. This would inflame doubt in vaccines, likely resulting in lower vaccination rates, and leading to deaths among the most vulnerable (e.g., babies, young children, pregnant mothers, people with disabilities, and frail seniors.) Further, these changes could result in higher out-of-pocket costs for people receiving vaccine coverage through Medicare Part D, adults on Medicaid, and people covered by private health plans.

Issue 2: The Ongoing Measles Epidemic

Background: The United States is currently suffering from a series of measles outbreaks with 1,288 confirmed cases. This is more than any year since 1992. Measles is highly contagious and can kill almost 3 out of every 1,000 people.

Kennedy's Statements:

- **Wyden QFR #198.** Yes or no, do you believe the vaccine for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) is safe and effective?
 - **Kennedy's Response:** As I testified to the Committee, I am not anti-vaccination. I am pro-safety.
- **Wyden QFR #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?
 - **Kennedy's 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.
- **Wyden QFR #251.** What will be your strategy to stop the spread of measles?
 - **Kennedy's Response:** As I testified to the Committee, vaccines play a critical role in health care, and I support the Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule.
- **U.S. Senate Finance Committee Hearing:** In response to Ranking Member Wyden's statement, **Kennedy said**, "Senator, I support the measles vaccine. I support the polio vaccine. I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking either of those vaccines."
- **U.S. Senate HELP Committee Hearing:** Senator Murray asked, "[w]ould you recommend that parents get their children vaccinated against the measles, yes or no?"
 - **Kennedy's Response:** "Against measles, yes."

Kennedy's Actions: Kennedy has downplayed the measles outbreak. Rather than focusing on support for vaccination, he has directed federal health agencies to search for new treatments and publicly touted alternatives to vaccination, like Vitamin A and cod liver oil. On April 30, he incorrectly claimed that Mennonites have legitimate religious reasons not to get the measles vaccine by incorrectly asserting that the vaccine "contains a lot of aborted fetus debris and DNA particles."

The Human Harm: Three people have died from these measles outbreaks, two of whom were school-aged children. Measles continues to circulate at record high rates.

Issue 3: Vaccine Access

Background: Vaccines are one of the greatest public health innovations of all time. One study estimated that global vaccine efforts have averted 154 million deaths. Further, the unprecedented development timeline of the COVID-19 vaccine helped mitigate the spread of the virus and facilitate a full reopening of public spaces.

Kennedy's Statements:

- **Wyden QFR #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?
 - **Kennedy's 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.
- **Senate Finance Committee Hearing:** Kennedy said to Senator Warren, "Senator, I support vaccines. I will – I support the childhood schedule." In response to Senator Sanders asking him to discontinue selling anti-vax onesies for infants, Kennedy said, "I'm supportive of vaccines."
- **Senate HELP Committee Hearing:** Senator Cassidy asked, "[a]nd do you commit that you will not impose new grant conditions outside of congressional direction for state, local or global entities that in any way limits, restricts, or rescinds access to vaccines or vaccine promotion programs?"
 - **Kennedy's Response:** "Yes."

Kennedy's Actions: On May 27, Kennedy bypassed the standard ACIP review process and announced on social media that he had removed the COVID-19 vaccine from the recommended schedule for some children and pregnant women. In late August, the FDA narrowed the labels for COVID-19 vaccines to more limited groups of patients such that the vaccines are only approved for those who are 65 or older or have other health problems. Additionally, on June 26, Kennedy announced that the United States would pull its support of the global vaccine alliance Gavi, which pays for children to receive routine immunizations across the world.

The Human Harm:

The COVID-19 Vaccine: Removing COVID-19 from the vaccine schedule for children and pregnant women will make it more difficult for these populations to access the vaccine. If they are able to secure it, it could be at a higher cost since health plans will no longer be required to

cover the vaccine without cost-sharing. Additionally, FDA's newest restrictions will make it harder for many people, including children and young adults, to get their next COVID-19 shot. More generally, COVID-19 vaccine access remains in flux in many states that require express recommendations from ACIP for distribution.

Global Vaccine Access: The United States was historically Gavi's largest donor, contributing roughly a quarter of the organization's total funding. The loss of this funding puts millions of children's ability to receive childhood vaccinations for serious, preventable diseases – and, consequently, their lives – at risk.

Issue 4: VICP

Background: In the extremely rare instance where a vaccine causes an injury or severe reaction, the VICP provides financial compensation to people who file a petition and are found to have been injured by a VICP-covered vaccine.

Kennedy's Statements:

- **Wyden QFR #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?
 - **Kennedy's 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.
- **Wyden QFR #189.** What impact do you anticipate changes to VICP would have on patient access to vaccines?
 - **Kennedy's 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.

Kennedy's Actions: The May 22 MAHA Report suggests that HHS has “the conflicting duty to promote vaccines and to defend them against claims of injury in the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.” Further, the MAHA Report suggests that VICP is a roadblock to HHS fulfilling its responsibility to improve vaccine safety. Later, Kennedy said he would be “revolutionizing the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.” In support of this work, Kennedy awarded a \$250,000 contract to a law firm that shares his unfounded and unscientific views about the safety of the Gardasil vaccine.

The Human Harm: Depending on what changes Kennedy makes, the VICP compensation fund may be fully depleted and vaccine manufacturers may exit the market. This would deprive the American public of access to existing and new life-saving vaccines. Further, Kennedy and his family are well-positioned to benefit financially if there are changes to the VICP program.