

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

RFK Jr. destroys the CDC, leaving the US unprepared for the next pandemic

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COALITION

From the Publisher and Editor: In 5-1/2 years of publishing that began with the Covid-19 lockdown, we have yet to see anything to match the bungling at HHS, not even during the chaos of Trump's 2020 response to the Covid-19 pandemic. More than half of our article summaries year-to-date have dealt with happenings in HHS. Chapter 4 of Lessons from the Pandemic, *"With Science Sidelined, U.S. Deaths Surge,"* is a good refresher. It's available at Amazon in both soft-cover and eBook versions. Click [here](#) to buy it. Click each headline for the full article and subscribe to **TMR** for \$25/year [here](#).



[As Measles Exploded, Officials in Texas Looked to CDC Scientists. Under Trump, No One Answered.](#)

By Amy Maxmen, KFF Health News, 8/25/25

TMR Topline – When the measles outbreak surged in West Texas earlier this year, CDC scientists were kept from supporting an emergency response, and it quickly became the worst US outbreak in over 30 years. In the month after Trump took office, his administration [interfered with](#) CDC communications, [stalled](#) the agency's [reports](#), [censored](#) its data, and also abruptly [laid off](#) staff. CDC experts felt restrained from talking openly with local public health workers. "CDC hasn't reached out to us locally," Katherine Wells, the public health director in Lubbock, Texas, wrote in a Feb. 5 email exchange with a colleague two weeks after children with measles were hospitalized in Lubbock. "My staff feels like we are out here all alone." One CDC researcher told KFF Health News, "All of us at CDC train for this moment, a massive outbreak, All this training and then we weren't allowed to do anything." Measles spread in under vaccinated communities in West Texas. [Researchers estimate](#) that when a person with measles is in the

same room with 10 unvaccinated people, nine will be infected and cases can multiply exponentially. HHS secretary RFK Jr. [fueled doubt](#) in vaccines and exaggerated [the ability of vitamins](#) to ward off disease. The [Texas outbreak](#) spread to four other states and Mexico and has sickened over 4,500 people, killed at least 16, and levied high costs on hospitals, health departments, and those paying medical bills. The outbreak illustrates the danger the US faces as vaccination [rates drop](#), misinformation flourishes, public health budgets are cut, and science agencies are subject to political manipulation.



[Clashing With RFK Jr., OB-GYNs Back Covid Shots During Pregnancy,](#)
by Andrea Nix, Bloomberg, 8/25/25

TMR Topline – The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommended Covid vaccines for pregnant women in its updated immunization [schedule](#), noting that women should get immunized when planning to become pregnant, during pregnancy or when lactating. HHS Secretary RFK Jr. removed the shots from a list of recommended vaccines for pregnant women earlier in [May](#). Vaccination confers immunity to infants and helps protect newborns in the first months of life, ACOG said. It's the second time a doctors' group split with the government over the shots, after the American Academy of Pediatrics [backed them](#) for children as young as 6 months. An HHS spokesperson said the agency and the CDC "will continue to be the official resource for any guidance."



[Kennedy's HHS is using AI effectively? Someone is hallucinating.](#) by
Raymond March,
Washington Post, 8/25/25

TMR Topline – HHS Secretary RFK Jr. promised to dramatically reform public health with the help of AI. After setting an "aggressive timeline" for incorporating the latest AI technology, the FDA launched Elsa, its new AI assistant in June. Top officials said it would be a "dynamic force" that would usher in "the AI era at the FDA." FDA employees found that it regularly made mis-

takes and routinely mischaracterized findings from clinical trials. Some claimed ELSA "was making stuff up" when summarizing documents. FDA officials have asserted this isn't true. Before ELSA's debut, HHS released a report in May that used Chat GPT documenting concerns about vaccines, prescription drugs and food safety. The report cited some nonexistent studies.

The problem isn't AI, but that HHS appears to be using AI technology that isn't ready, or appropriate. The international scientific journal Healthcare reviewed 200 studies on the impact of AI on healthcare economics finding overwhelming evidence that, when used properly, AI significantly reduces costs. AI's potential to improve healthcare is unprecedented when used properly by people who understand both its potential and its limitations. RFK Jr.'s effort to expand the use of AI at HHS has been disappointing and left little reason to expect improvement. Hoping otherwise is a hallucination that even AI might not be able to fix.



Farm Action

[RFK Jr.'s MAHA Strategy Blasted by Farm Group That Endorsed](#)

[Him](#), by Nick Mordowanec, Newsweek, 8/25/25

TMR Topline – Farm Action, the nonpartisan, farmer-led watchdog organization, claimed to be the only such organization to endorse RFK Jr. for HHS Secretary, but is having second thoughts, giving the "Make America Healthy Again" draft a "D+" grade. MAHA's April assessment called out systemic issues like corporate capture and consolidation in the food system, [chemical contamination](#) in agriculture, and federal programs like crop insurance that drive production of commodity crops over healthy foods. *"But between April and August, the White House met with powerful lobbyists—and the influence shows,"* said Angela Huffman, Farm Action's President. She continued: *"It also leaves crop insurance and subsidy distortions untouched, keeping fruit and vegetable growers at a disadvantage."* She did note that the administration's support of small meat processors and mobile processing units was a good sign and welcomed by the farming community.



[US CDC chief fired after weeks in role, challenges ouster as four top officials resign](#)

by Ahmed Aboulenein, Dan Levine and Michael Erman, Reuters, 8/27/25

TMR Topline – The White House fired CDC Director Susan Monarez saying she was not "aligned with the President's agenda of Making America Healthy Again." Four senior CDC officials also resigned, citing a rise in health misinformation especially on vaccines, attacks on science, the weaponization of public health, and attempts to cut the agency's budget and influence amid growing tensions over vaccine policies and public health directives. Monarez was [confirmed](#) by the US Senate July 29 and sworn in by HHS Secretary Kennedy July 31. During her confirmation hearing, Monarez said she has not seen evidence [linking vaccines and autism](#), unlike RFK Jr. who has promoted the discredited claim of such a link.

The White House sought to [cut the CDC's budget](#) by almost \$3.6 billion to \$4 billion for 2026, and RFK Jr. cut [2,400 CDC employees](#) earlier this year, though some [700 were rehired](#). He has made [sweeping changes to vaccine policies](#), including [withdrawing federal recommendations](#) for Covid shots for pregnant women and healthy children, and [firing all members](#) of the CDC's vaccine advisory panel, replacing them with [hand-picked advisers](#) including anti-vaccine activists. Monarez's attorneys accused RFK Jr. of targeting her for refusing to support "unscientific directives" and dismiss health experts.



[CDC officials escorted from headquarters as chaos engulfs health agency](#), by Mike Stobbe, Amanda Seitz and Chris Megerian Associated Press, 8/28/25

TMR Topline – Following the White House's removal of CDC Director Susan Monarez, the agency's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Debra Houry resigned along with Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, head of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases and Dr. Daniel Jernigan of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. HHS deputy secretary Jim O'Neill will serve as interim Director of the CDC. He has no training in medicine or health, but served for six years at HHS under President George W. Bush.

TMR's Take: The US public health infrastructure, weakened by years of underfunding, is quickly being destroyed by the RFK Jr. wrecking ball. The Healing American Healthcare Coalition will nominate him for the 2025 Lown Institute [Shkreli Award](#), given each year to perpetrators of the most egregious examples of dysfunction in healthcare. We fear for our grandchildren's survival when the next pandemic hits.