

Policy Update: Make America Healthy Again Commission Releases Strategy Report on Chronic Childhood Disease

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – September 11, 2025

On September 9, the Trump Administration’s Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission released its long anticipated [strategy report](#) to *Make Our Children Healthy Again*. In February, President Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) establishing the [MAHA Commission](#), comprised of leaders from key health, agricultural, environmental and economic agencies to reduce the burden of chronic disease among U.S. youth. The EO directed the Commission to develop an [assessment report](#) identifying the main drivers of childhood chronic disease and then produce a strategic report to lay out a federal interagency plan to combat the assessment’s findings. The assessment report identified four potential drivers of the childhood chronic disease crisis: poor diet, chemical exposures, lack of physical activity and increased chronic stress, and overmedicalization.

After undergoing public scrutiny for misrepresenting sources cited in the assessment report, the Commission pushed back the anticipated release date for the strategy report. Once released, the [strategy report](#) set a softer tone against the food and agriculture industries than was previously anticipated. The shift was likely driven by the Commission’s engagement with nearly 150 stakeholder groups, which highlighted the urgent need to factor political feasibility into the Trump Administration’s plan to overhaul the federal government. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Food Policy Adviser Calley Means spoke during a Heritage Foundation event shortly before a leaked version of the strategy was released where he underscored the importance of regulating food companies, a policy position that is widely shared across Americans. However, these statements contrasted sharply with the content in the strategy report, which had little to no mention of regulating food companies.

The strategy report outlines four main directives to end childhood chronic disease, as it pertains to the aforementioned drivers of disease:

1. **Advance Research:** In line with President Trump’s EO on *Restoring of the Gold Standard of Science*, the strategy report focuses on advancing research related to the MAHA agenda. This would include programs led by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would address the cumulative health effects of chemical exposures, water and air quality, microplastics and synthetics, and prioritize precision agricultural technology. Additionally, the report highlights federal interest in developing initiatives and real-world data platforms to help elucidate the root causes of chronic disease, including oral health, nutrition, and gut microbiome research. Notably, there is a continued push to pursue research on new approach methodologies (NAMs) to reduce animal research, as well as to expand vaccine injury research programs.
2. **Realign Incentives to Drive Innovation:** The Commission focused on changes at regulatory agencies related to the four drivers of disease, identifying policy reforms to be made across HHS, USDA, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Some of the recommendations included limiting the use of food dyes and chemical additives, updating

nutrition requirements for hospitals and schools, improving guidelines for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, and modernizing nutrition requirements for infant formula. The report also encourages USDA to explore improvements to the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Additional policy reforms include increasing oversight of direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical and food advertising, revising nutrition labeling and dietary guidelines, safeguarding against the overmedicalization of children, and promoting access to early childhood physical activity and sunscreen. The Commission also recommends the restructuring of existing HHS and EPA programs to carry out these priorities.

3. **Increasing Public Awareness:** Radical transparency and increasing access to information continue to be pillars of the Administration's policy priorities. This aligns with the report's focus on launching public health campaigns to equip parents with the tools to make informed healthcare decisions for their children and rebuilding public trust in federal health institutions. This includes developing education campaigns about the importance of physical activity and nutrition, the soon-to-be updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), and the effect of screentime on children. Additionally, the report aims to increase public awareness about appropriate levels of fluoride in drinking water, build confidence in the EPA's pesticide review procedures, as well as highlight the dangers of illegal vapes, synthetic opioid products, and chronic use of prescription opioids.
4. **Foster Private Sector Collaboration:** The strategy report emphasizes that private sector support will be critical to advancing MAHA initiatives. In particular, the strategy report calls on the broader community to work with HHS, USDA, the Department of Education (ED), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Department of Defense (DOD) to help transform how children eat, learn about nutrition, and increase their physical activity. The report also urges HHS to launch a MAHA education campaign that can improve fertility among individuals who would like to start families by establishing an *HHS Root Causes of Infertility Award Challenge Competition* and developing an *Infertility Training Center* that can train Title X clinics to work with patients struggling with infertility. Additionally, the report calls for the USDA and EPA to launch a partnership with private industry to advance precision agriculture technology, including remote sensing and precision pesticide applications, with the goal of limiting pesticide usage while improving crop productivity. The report also proposes for USDA and EPA to expand support for voluntary, incentive-based programs like the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conversation Stewardship Program (CSP) to improve soil health.

The strategy was released at a time when the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bills for fiscal year (FY) 2026 had already been introduced and debated at the Committee level. Despite being absent from the Senate bill, the House bill includes \$100 million in new funding for a new MAHA initiative led by the HHS Secretary, which falls short of the \$500 million investment proposed by President Trump in his budget request. Additionally, both the House and Senate bills rejected the HHS reorganization proposed in the budget request. The reorganization would have established a new Administration for a Healthy America (AHA) that would drive much of the work on chronic disease by consolidating major existing federal health agencies such as the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), and parts of the CDC into AHA.

This signals that despite bipartisan agreement on many core tenets of the Administration's health agenda, Congress is still not completely bought in on Secretary Kennedy's vision for MAHA.

It remains unclear how federal agencies will implement the recommendations outlined in the strategic report, given the lack of dedicated funding proposed in both the House and Senate bills. Some of the MAHA initiatives with clear bipartisan appeal include support for telehealth services aimed at improving chronic care and nutrition, Food is Medicine (FIM) research initiatives focused on nutrition science, and increasing access to mental health services. However, there are also many clear examples in the House bill that highlight significant discrepancies between the Administrative and Congressional positions on vaccine policy, specifically calling on the importance of vaccines for children. However, it is unlikely that Congress will even be able to pass full year appropriation bills for FY 2026 spending by the start of the fiscal year, as the prospects of a continuing resolution (CR) or a potential government shutdown continue to loom.

Lewis-Burke will continue to monitor activities related to the MAHA Commission.

Sources and Additional Information

- More information about the MAHA Commission can be found at:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/establishing-the-presidents-make-america-healthy-again-commission/>
- More information about the assessment report on *Make our Children Health Again* can be found at:
<https://static01.nyt.com/newsgraphics/documenttools/fd441e56ad4bcf36/2f18e38b-full.pdf>
- More information about the strategy report on *Make our Children Healthy Again* can be found at:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/The-MAHA-Strategy-WH.pdf>