

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Defends His Health Policies to the US Senate

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October 26, 2025

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Robert F. Kennedy Jr. reported that 76.4% of Americans now have chronic diseases compared to just 11% during JFK's presidency, calling it a national security threat
- › Kennedy defended removing all 17 CDC advisory committee members, arguing the agency failed during the COVID-19 pandemic and needs transparent, evidence-based leadership to restore public trust
- › The One Big Beautiful Bill provides \$50 billion over five years to rural hospitals, representing a 50% funding increase to prevent closures
- › The U.S. Health and Human Services is working on requiring TV drug commercials to display prices and securing commitments from Pharmacy Benefit Managers for pricing transparency
- › Kennedy announced a major investigation into transplant system failures, including allegations of "line-skipping" and unethical organ procurement practices from contractors

On September 4, 2025, U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. attended the President's 2026 Health Care Agenda hearing, appearing before the Senate Committee on Finance.¹

The hearing allowed senators to question Kennedy's recent shake-up of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). At the same time, Kennedy used the opportunity to defend his vision and lay out his future plans to accomplish President

Trump's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) campaign.

I encourage you to listen to the entire hearing, which is over three hours long.² If it's too much in one sitting, I recommend you break it up in parts. It contains new, eye-opening information regarding the corruption behind our health agencies, and what Kennedy aims to do to improve public health while regaining the trust that was broken because of the draconian **COVID-19** pandemic policies.

A Vision for a Healthier America

In his opening statement, Kennedy set the tone by telling the committee the country is finally shifting from what he called a "sick care system" to a real health care system that tackles the root causes of chronic diseases.

- **Chronic disease levels are at crisis levels** — Kennedy noted that 76.4% of Americans are diagnosed with a chronic disease right now, calling it a national security issue that threatens the country's future. "When my uncle was president, it was 11%. In 1950, it was 3%. Today it's 76.4%," he said.
- **Getting down to the roots of chronic disease** — Kennedy told the committee that the White House released the MAHA Report, which he described as the first government review to look at the key drivers of chronic disease.

The report pointed to four main culprits — **ultraprocessed foods**, chemical exposures, physical inactivity, and what he called "over-medicalization" — the tendency to use too many drugs and procedures rather than addressing lifestyle factors. Kennedy promised that a full strategy plan will follow, detailing how each of these problems will be tackled.

- **Actions the HHS has taken during the first half-year under Kennedy** — These included cracking down on food dyes and contaminated baby formula, closing loopholes in food safety laws, reviewing fluoride levels in drinking water, fighting the

sale of addictive "gas station heroin" and e-cigarettes, and working to lower drug prices and make prior authorization faster and easier for patients.

He wrapped up this statement by saying that Americans are now living under the "busiest, most proactive administration in HHS history."

- **A necessary reset at the CDC** – Kennedy argued that the agency failed its most basic mission during the COVID-19 pandemic, pointing out that America has 4.2% of the world's population but nearly 20% of its COVID deaths.

"We literally did worse than any country in the world," he said. Kennedy explained that many CDC leaders were leaving because the agency needed "bold, competent, and creative new leadership." He insisted that his goal is to give you "unbiased, politics-free, transparent, evidence-based science," so you can trust public health guidance again.

- **Restoring trust and focusing federal programs where they matter** – Kennedy said programs like Medicaid need to serve those who truly need them and that new reforms in the One Big Beautiful Bill are designed to reduce waste and improper payments so that coverage is preserved for the most vulnerable patients.
- **Kennedy aims to change the entire culture of health care in America** – He made it clear that his campaign isn't only about cutting medical bloat or political debates – it is also about making sure you and your family have a future where chronic disease does not hold you back. "If we don't end this chronic disease, we are the sickest country in the world," he warned, promising to make tough personnel decisions at the HHS and the CDC to make sure "this doesn't happen again."

Keeping Rural Hospitals Alive and Well

The problems facing rural hospitals did not just appear overnight. Senator Mike Crapo said Congress had been studying the issue for years and that the One Big Beautiful Bill was created specifically to stop the collapse of rural health care systems.

Crapo explained that the new law injects \$50 billion into rural hospitals over five years, representing a more than 50% increase in federal support for these communities. This infusion of money is meant not only to keep hospitals open, but also to help them modernize and prepare for long-term stability.

- **Kennedy backed Crapo's comments** — He noted that more than 120 rural hospitals had closed in the last decade and many towns are now at risk of losing their most important community anchor. He called rural hospitals "economic centers" and "the centerpiece for those communities," saying that when a hospital closes, the whole town suffers — jobs disappear, and people lose access to urgent care.

Kennedy framed the Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program as President Trump's direct answer to the crisis and said it was designed to stop what he described as a slow-motion collapse of small-town health care.

- **Rural hospital leaders are not panicking about the bill** — Crapo said they are working with Dr. Mehmet Oz and other officials to carefully plan the rollout so that the money is used effectively.
- **Cleaning up fraud, waste, and abuse in the system** — Kennedy pointed out that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) found millions of duplicate enrollments in Medicaid and Affordable Care Act exchange plans. He said that fixing these errors will save \$14 billion a year while making sure those who are legally eligible will get to keep their coverage.
- **Chronic disease is a bigger threat to the country than most political debates admit** — The rising rates of heart disease, diabetes, and other conditions are costing \$1.3 trillion each year and threatening national security since 8 out of 10 young Americans are [too sick to serve in the military](#).
- **The path forward is about changing incentives so that health care rewards you well for being healthy** — That means focusing on lifestyle and environmental changes — healthier food, safer products, and better access to chronic disease prevention — so

that fewer people need expensive treatment later in life.

Again, Kennedy said that failing to act would keep the U.S. as "the sickest country in the world" and that his job was to fire people and reorganize agencies if that's what it takes to put prevention first.

The Clash Between Following the Science and Public Trust

This part of the hearing turned into a fierce debate over the shots, science, and the role of government in public health. This issue started before the hearing when Kennedy removed all 17 members of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.³

- **An agency shake-up was deemed necessary** — Other senators joined in, questioning Kennedy on both the substance and optics of his personnel decisions. Senator John Cornyn pressed him on whether he truly intended to remove politics from science, asking directly if his goal was to keep scientific research independent.

Kennedy replied, "That's what my mission is," framing his actions as a way to restore the credibility of public health advice. Senator Michael Bennett challenged him on specific appointees, including Dr. Robert Malone, who is widely known for questioning mRNA shots. Kennedy defended these choices as necessary to bring a broader range of views and argued that **dissenting scientists had been silenced** during the pandemic.

- **Rebuilding confidence in health authorities** — Senator John Barrasso told Kennedy that Americans had lost faith in health agencies after the pandemic and asked how he planned to rebuild that trust. Kennedy answered that the only path forward was to make CDC decision-making fully transparent and data-driven so you could see exactly why policies were being made. He said that the secrecy and top-down mandates of the COVID-19 pandemic had backfired and fueled skepticism.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic measures harmed Americans** – Kennedy countered the charge that he was anti-science by turning the argument back on the government's COVID-19 response. He said mask mandates, school closures, and **lockdowns** were imposed without solid evidence and caused immense damage to families and businesses.

In addition, Kennedy argued that scientists who questioned these measures were fired and insisted that his shake-up at the CDC was about ending that culture. "We need unbiased, politics-free, transparent, evidence-based science in the public interest," Kennedy said, promising that the next three years would look very different.

Taking Aim at High Drug Costs Set by Big Pharma

The hearing then shifted to the problem of rising drug prices and the complicated system surrounding it. Senator James Lankford raised the issue of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and how their lack of transparency hurts rural pharmacies. He said that many local drugstores are closing because they cannot survive under current payment systems.

Kennedy agreed that PBMs have been too secretive about their pricing and said his department has secured commitments from them to follow new transparency protocols. He noted that direct-to-consumer models are being considered to "eliminate the middleman."

- **A push for better pricing transparency** – Senator Chuck Grassley pushed for even more openness by asking Kennedy whether he would support requiring drug ads on TV to list their prices. Grassley argued that if you are seeing a commercial for medication, you also have the right to know right away how much it will cost.

Kennedy responded that HHS is actively working on such a rule and that it aligns with the administration's goal of giving you clear information so you can make better health decisions. This is part of a broader theme of putting consumers in

charge by arming them with information that used to be hidden behind legal and corporate walls.

- **Imperfections will still need to be ironed out** — Senator Catherine Cortez Masto pressed Kennedy on whether he even knew how much seniors were going to pay next year. She pointed out that Part B premiums are expected to jump 11.6%, taking them to \$206 per month in 2026 — one of the biggest single-year increases in decades.

Kennedy admitted he did not have the exact figures during the hearing but insisted that the administration's Program Integrity Bill had already lowered premiums by about 5% in other areas.

The Organ Donation Problem Reaches the Senate

[In a previous article](#), I discussed how Kennedy made the decision to publish his findings about the widespread failures in the organ donation system. Now, this topic was also discussed during the hearing.

- **The system is dishonest** — Grassley raised concerns about disturbing reports of "line-skipping" in transplant allocation — situations where some patients allegedly received organs ahead of others who had been waiting longer. He also cited whistleblower claims about attempts to procure organs from patients who were "still showing signs of life," which he said demanded a full investigation.

Senator Ron Wyden echoed these concerns and reminded the committee that transplant policy is supposed to be based on fairness and medical urgency, not money or connections. He said the American people deserve to know that if they or a loved one needs a transplant, the system will treat them equally.

- **The new administration aims to rectify previous organ transplant failures** — Kennedy responded by saying that HHS had "mounted a major investigation" into the entire transplant system. He explained that the department had already acted by

ending the contract with a legacy organ procurement contractor that he said had failed to meet ethical and operational standards.

Kennedy noted that the entire industry is being reorganized to ensure that such abuses cannot happen again, calling it a matter of life and death for thousands of patients waiting for organs.

The Battle Between Costs and Cuts of Health Care Expenditure

As the hearing moved back to the state of health care finances, the focus turned to whether the Trump administration's policies will help or hurt your wallet. Senator Wyden warned that the One Big Beautiful Bill signed by President Trump contained what he called "the largest health care cuts in American history" and predicted that they would hit like a "wrecking ball" after the next election.

He pointed to real-world examples, such as hospitals in Idaho reducing payments and Providence Seaside Hospital in Oregon closing its labor and delivery unit.

- **The reduction of health care costs is false** – Kennedy rejected the claims, stating bluntly, "There are no cuts to Medicaid." He argued that the narrative about funding reductions was misleading and said that the new law was designed to stabilize programs rather than take them away.

However, Senator Mark Warner challenged Kennedy, saying rural hospitals in Virginia were on the verge of shutting down and that communities were bracing for disaster. Warner urged Kennedy to support raising the "area wage index" – a policy change that would boost payments to rural hospitals so they could pay staff competitive wages. Kennedy confirmed that both he and President Trump supported that fix.

- **Rural hospitals will benefit** – Kennedy also reminded the committee that the One Big Beautiful Bill was delivering a \$50 billion boost to rural hospitals. Senator Lankford reported that rural hospital leaders in Oklahoma were "very pleased" about

this funding and were working with CMS and Dr. Oz to plan how to use the money effectively.

Other Big Issues on the Table

The hearing also covered several other topics that touched the average American's health care experience in less obvious but still important ways. Senator Lankford brought up the problem of delays in Medicare Advantage, which affects many seniors who rely on this coverage. He asked Kennedy what HHS is doing to fix slow approval times and cut through the red tape that frustrates patients. Kennedy said his team is working to speed up the process so you can get care without waiting months for paperwork to clear.

- **Research funding is coming back properly** – Senator Lankford also mentioned that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants had been frozen for a time but were recently released. He commended Kennedy's department for moving quickly to restart these grants, which support vital medical research, including long-term studies that track health outcomes over decades.

This is promising news because it means new treatments and deeper knowledge regarding chronic conditions are less likely to be delayed by funding gaps.

- **Another topic that the hearing focused on is interoperability** – In other words, it's the ability of different health systems to share data easily so you don't have to lug paper records from doctor to doctor. Senator Marsha Blackburn thanked Kennedy for launching a new interoperability framework and asked how it will fit with the existing national standards.

Kennedy explained that HHS had brought together 60 top technology companies to agree on common principles for data sharing, patient access, and interoperability. Eventually, it means that your health records follow you seamlessly between providers, making care more efficient and reducing the chances of errors.

- **The collusion with big industry corporations will eventually be stopped** – Finally, Senator Blackburn circled back to rural health care by thanking Kennedy for addressing conflicts of interest between regulators and the industries involved. She said it was "unseemly" that people could move from big food or drug companies into federal agencies and then regulate their former employers, or vice versa.

Kennedy agreed, saying that ending this "revolving door" is essential to restoring public confidence. This means future health policies need to be less influenced by private profit and more focused on what keeps you healthy.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Senate Finance Committee Hearing

Q: What is Kennedy's main goal with the "Make America Healthy Again" plan?

A: Kennedy wants to shift the U.S. health system from "sick care" – just treating you when you get ill – to prevention-based solutions. He said 76.4% of Americans now have at least one chronic disease, which he called a national security issue. His plan focuses on tackling ultraprocessed foods, chemical exposures, physical inactivity, and over-medicalization so you and your family can stay healthier in the first place.

Q: How is the administration supporting rural health care?

A: The One Big Beautiful Bill directs \$50 billion over five years – a 50% funding boost – to rural hospitals. Kennedy and Senator Crapo said this is meant to stop closures, modernize rural health systems, and keep jobs and emergency care in small towns. Rural hospital leaders are working with CMS and Dr. Mehmet Oz on careful rollout plans to make sure the money leads to lasting improvements.

Q: Why did Kennedy shake up the CDC and vaccine advisory panel?

A: Kennedy argued that the CDC failed during the COVID-19 pandemic, pointing out that the U.S. had nearly 20% of global COVID deaths despite having only 4.2% of the world's population. He removed all 17 members of the vaccine advisory committee and replaced them with what he calls a more diverse group, saying it was necessary to eliminate conflicts of interest. He promised to make CDC decisions transparent so you can see the science behind its recommendations.

Q: What steps are being taken to lower drug prices?

A: Kennedy said HHS has secured commitments from Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) to be more transparent about their pricing. Senator Grassley pushed for drug commercials to show prices, and Kennedy said HHS is working on a rule to make that happen. However, senators pressed Kennedy about expected premium hikes for Medicare Part B and Part D, warning you might still see higher costs soon.

Q: What other health issues were discussed in the hearing?

A: Several other important issues came up, including organ transplant oversight, where Kennedy said HHS is reorganizing the system to prevent unfair "line-skipping." The hearing also covered Medicare Advantage delays (with Kennedy promising faster approvals), the release of NIH research funds to keep studies moving, and new efforts to make health records shareable between providers.

Kennedy also pledged to end the "revolving door" between industry and federal agencies, aiming to make regulations more focused on protecting your health than corporate interests.

Sources and References

- ¹ United States Committee on Finance, "The President's 2026 Health Care Agenda"
- ² MSNBC, September 4, 2025
- ³ Axios, September 4, 2025