

AN UNHEALTHY AMERICA

White Paper



Where big thoughts are refined



The Trump administration, department of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr, MAHA, nor any health agency has hired Thought Provoking to write this white paper. This is a hypothetical white paper, primarily used as a sample, addressing many of the health concerns in the United States of America, and presenting MAHA as the solution to those concerns.

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For:

MAKE AMERICA HEALTHY AGAIN (MAHA)

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ABSTRACT

Most Americans do not live a healthy lifestyle. According to a recent study conducted by Oregon State University, researchers assessed data from 4,700 people who participated in the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Survey. They found that only 2.7% of Americans eat healthy, do not smoke, and get regular exercise. This means that over 97% of Americans do not live a healthy lifestyle according to the sample size. The survey expected the participant's behaviors to reflect general health and wellness advice doctors typically gave patients but did not expect them to answer like elite athletes. However, delving deeper into the survey, 71% did not smoke, 46% got enough exercise, 38% had a balanced diet, and 10% had a normal body fat percentage. There is an increased risk factor for several health conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, and heart disease, and a lack of proper diet and exercise. Even more alarming, physical inactivity and poor diet combined are responsible for more premature deaths every year than smoking. According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, an average American diet is filled with saturated fat, added sugar, and a lack of nutrients from natural food sources. (Popeck, L, 2024). Good health generally appears to be a personal choice, combined with routine doctor visits. However, politicians can take further steps by playing a key role in pushing policies that promote a healthier lifestyle for the general population, which should be explored. Let us discuss the multifaceted concerns of an unhealthy America, and how Robert F. Kennedy Jr's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) initiative, launched as U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services under President Donald J. Trump is the solution to America's health concerns.

Make America Healthy Again (MAHA)

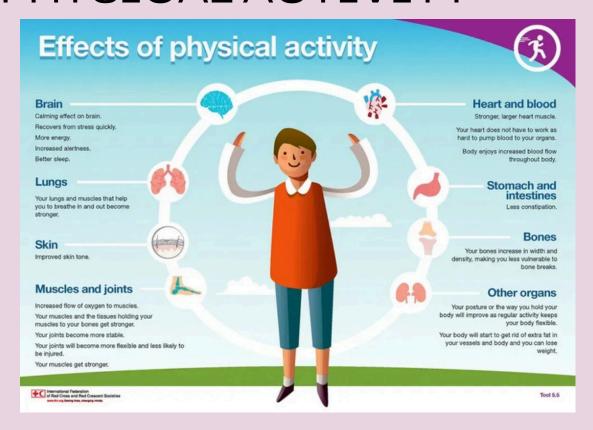
Regulation of Food and Nutrition

America's health will likely improve if politicians healthy foods. Roughly 48 million people in the U.S. year from foodborne diseases, according to recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The good news is that this health burden is largely preventable. Congress has acted through the FDA Food nation's food safety system, stirring the focus from responding to foodborne illness to prevention. This is in response to dramatic changes in the global food system preventable foodborne illnesses are both a significant FSMA include recognizing that the safety of the food supply is a shared responsibility among many points in the global supply chain for human and animal food (FDA, 2024). Similar policies can lead to stricter nutritional labeling requirements and provide people with more detailed and relatable information about their consumption. Increased taxes on sugary beverages and highly processed foods will steer many away from the revenue could be used to fund initiatives for public health. Also, providing subsidies for healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy oils can influence Americans to pick healthy greens over transincome communities. Still, diet is only the foundation, individual.

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PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Promoting physical activity in schools, enhancing infrastructures for physical activity, and offering employers incentives for their employee's wellness are impactful methods and strategies to build upon the foundation of healthy Americans. Politicians can require and fund daily physical education in schools to ensure that students get regular exercise. Even further, politicians can finance the construction and maintenance of public parks, bike lanes, sports facilities, and walking trails to encourage physical activities for all age groups. Sidewalks and safe street crossings are promising to promote physical activity in neighborhoods. They can also have a positive effect on obesity. Improvements to the vicinities of schools can increase the number of children who bicycle and walk. Less experienced pedestrians and bicyclists may feel more comfortable on paths and trails separated from automobile traffic (National Academy of Sciences, 2009). Politicians can also offer tax incentives or grants to businesses implementing workplace wellness programs. Gym membership, fitness challenges, or flexible hours to encourage physical activity are examples of how employers could incentivize wellness. Of course, with the proper backing of politicians, it will empower employers to offer fitness and wellness incentives to employees. Incentives for physical activity will build on the foundation of a healthy America. However, politicians must take further steps to steer Americans away from harmful substances intertwined in their daily lives.

REGULATION OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES





Harmful substances such as tobacco, e-cigarettes, and alcohol need stronger regulations, and opioid and prescription drugs must be monitored intensely to avoid misuse. Politicians can implement stricter rules on tobacco products and e-cigarettes, including raising the legal age for purchase, increasing the taxes on them, and banning advertising that targets young people. Politicians can also strengthen laws on alcohol advertising, specifically for minors. They can also regulate when and where alcohol can be sold to reduce harmful consumption. Tobacco use for men is associated with 92% of the trachea, bronchus, and lung cancers. For the women, the association is 62%. Users of both alcohol and tobacco have a 5-fold increased risk of developing cancers of the oral cavity, oropharynx, larynx, and esophagus compared to individuals who use either alcohol or tobacco alone. With heavy users, the risk is up to 30 times higher. Tobacco use accounts for 25% of all cancer deaths globally and is the primary cause of lung cancer, which is preventable if current smokers quit. With alcohol, there is no safe level of consumption. According to the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, in 2018, about 180,000 cases of cancer and 92,000 cancer deaths were linked to alcohol in the region (World Health Organization, 2021). Politicians also must establish stricter prescription drug monitoring programs to prevent opioid misuse and promote responsible prescribing practices. As it stands, it is too easy for Americans to make harmful substances a part of their everyday lives due to the laxing of external forces. Increased health education and awareness can make Americans aware of the various self-inflicted wounds they engage in that can be reversed.

Health Education and Awareness

Promoting public health campaigns and mental health awareness and resources are powerful strategies to elevate the health of Americans. Politicians can pass legislation that large-scale public health funds campaigns to inform citizens on topics such as healthy eating, physical fitness, mental health, and the dangers of substance abuse or smoking. As many Americans may experienced, proactive have measures are more effective and efficient than reactive measures. Unfortunately, not all health concerns are identified on the proactive radar, but a variety of them are, some of which can save lives and avoid costly medical treatment and According to the Trust for America's Health report, The Impact of Chronic Underfunding on America's Public Health System 2024: Trends, Risks, and Recommendations, America's rising rates of chronic disease and its insufficient response to COVID-19 were due in part to decades of underinvestment in public health infrastructure and its workforce



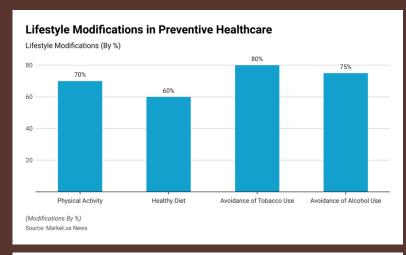
Federal funding has not kept pace with the nation's growing public health challenges. Funding for health programs and disease prevention programs such as obesity, cancer, and substance misuse is so low that evidence-based, proven programs are not in place in many states and communities due to lack of funding (Trust for America's Health, 2024). Politicians can also promote mental health literacy through public health emphasizing campaigns, importance of mental well-being and encouraging individuals to seek help when needed. Often, there is a stigma surrounding the subject of mental health, making it difficult for victims to reveal it to doctors and peers to understand. Politicians can ease these concerns with public awareness and take further steps to create a healthy America with mental health legislation.

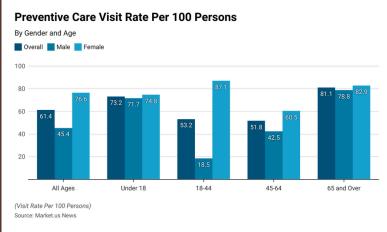
Legislating for Mental Health

Mental health parity laws, telehealth for mental health, and improving workplace mental health standards can help Americans receive the proper help and navigate around the social stigma of mental health. Politicians can pass laws to ensure that mental health services receive the same insurance coverage as physical health services so individuals can access affordable mental healthcare. The Mental Health Parity and Addition Equity Act (MHPAEA)of 2008 is a federal law that generally prevents group health plans and health insurance issuers having mental health or substance use disorder benefits from imposing less favorable benefit limitations on those benefits than on medical/surgical benefits. The previous law, the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996 (MHPA), provided that large group health plans cannot impose annual or lifetime dollar limits on mental health benefits unfavorable to any such limits imposed on medical/surgical benefits. MHPAEA preserved the protections of MHPA and added new significant protections, such as extending the parity requirements to substance use disorders. MHPAEA generally ensures that financial requirements on mental health and surgical benefits cannot be more restrictive than predominant financial requirements and treatment limitations that apply substantially all medical/surgical classification. It also provides separate requirements and treatment limitations that only apply to mental health and substance use disorders. On September 9th, 2024, MHPAEA rules were amended to assure mental health and substance use disorder seekers of treatment are not more burdened (U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, n.d.). Politicians can promote the use of telehealth for mental health services, especially in rural areas where access to in-person care might be limited or the social stigma may be heightened. Also, politicians can enact legislation that requires large employers to offer mental health support programs and create workplace policies that promote mental well-being. This could include offering counseling services or stress management programs. Mental health is often a taboo subject, but politicians can make it more socially acceptable to openly discuss it to take the initial steps to create healthier results. Another taboo subject is the importance of preventative healthcare, which can go far in reducing medical costs or even worse.



Encouraging Preventative Healthcare





Free preventative screenings, mandatory vaccination policies, and wellness checkup initiatives offer promising solutions to tackle the costly health concerns of Americans. Politicians can mandate that all health insurance plans cover essential preventive screenings such as cancer screenings, vaccinations, and annual physicals at no additional cost to patients. Politicians can implement or strengthen vaccination requirements for schoolchildren and healthcare workers to limit the spread of preventable diseases.

Of course, pros and cons must be considered before mandating vaccines, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox and nearly a variety of other diseases. However. vaccine-preventable diseases have not disappeared, so mandated vaccination serves a great purpose. Vaccine mandates can infringe upon constitutionally protected religious freedoms. The Constitution's Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Vaccine mandates save children. their parents. society time and money. However, the government should not intervene in personal medical decisions. The final say in medical decisions should be left to the individual, parent, or caregiver for minors (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 2023). Although vaccines are an effective way of preventing diseases. politicians consider the input and rights of constituents before one-size-fits-all implementing Politicians solutions. can regular encourage health checkups by offering tax credits or rebates to citizens who get annual wellness exams, reducing long-term healthcare costs through early detection. Unfortunately, the high cost of living can force Americans to avoid health insurance costs. Incentivizing annual physicals will save lives, personal expenses, and taxpayer funds. There are also social determinants health that politicians address to help Americans better manage their health.

Addressing Social Determinants of Health

Passing laws on affordable housing legislation, access to healthy food, transportation, and active commuting can assist Americans in managing a healthy lifestyle and behavior. Politicians could pass laws that address housing affordability and quality, as housing insecurity is closely linked to poor health outcomes. There is a heightened risk for health outcomes when households struggle to pay rent. As Americans experience homelessness, they struggle to eat nutritious food, manage chronic health conditions, and get regular preventative care. Generally, high housing costs will worsen the adversity that low-income families experience. As they face the persistent threat of eviction, they're forced to make difficult choices between paying the rent and paying for medicine, food, heating, transportation, and other essentials. Housing costs can also compel families to live in housing or neighborhoods that are swarmed with health and safety risks (Bailey, P, 2020). **Politicians** should also fund programs that bring grocery stores and farmers' markets into food deserts-areas where access to fresh, healthy food is limited. Politicians can also support legislation encouraging active commuting, including walking or biking, by investing in public transportation and creating safe, pedestrian-friendly urban areas. According to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, social determinants of health can be grouped into five domains: Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Health Care Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social Community and Context. Unfortunately, social determinants of health have a significant impact on people's health, well-being, and quality of life, including racism, discrimination, violence, language and literary skills, and polluted air and water (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d.) Politicians can take further steps with environmental health legislation to protect Americans from often unseen health concerns.



Clean air and water regulations, sustainable food systems, and green energy investments can protect Americans from hidden health risks that are typically out of their control. Politicians can enforce stricter environmental regulations to reduce air and water pollution, which can severely affect public health. The Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the water of the United States and regulating the quality standards for surface waters. The basis was enacted in 1948, originally called the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, but it was significantly expanded and reorganized in 1972. Ultimately, the CWA made it unlawful to discharge pollutants from a point source into navigable waters unless a permit was obtained (Environment Protection Agency, n.d.). Politicians can legislate for sustainable agriculture practices that reduce harmful chemicals, improve food quality, and protect public health and the environment. Politicians can also pass legislation that promotes the transition to renewable energy sources, improving overall air quality and reducing diseases caused by pollution. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 allocated around \$550 billion for clean energy and infrastructure, and the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 provided an estimated \$370 billion in funding to promote energy security and combat climate change. Tax credits from the IRA make clean energy projects in the United States more competitive and incentivize investments in vulnerable energy communities. The increased investment moves capital flows towards alignment with long-term goals to achieve economy-wide net-zero emissions by 2050 (IEA, 2024). As powerful and promising as green energy investments can be, it is important for politicians not to pass legislation that forces America from sustainable and reliable forms of energy Americans currently use. Policies for environmental health mean very little if politicians do not address the variety of health concerns surrounding obesity.

Make America Healthy Again (MAHA)

TACKLING OBESITY



BMI monitoring in schools and banning junk food ads targeting kids are great methods to target obesity in America. Politicians can require schools to monitor and report on Body Mass Index (BMI) for students, coupled with counseling and support for those at risk for obesity. Obesity is a controversial subject to tackle, especially in children, but this is a significant public health concern in America. Obesity can affect all aspects of children and adolescents. This includes, but is not limited to, a child's psychological, cardiovascular, and overall physical health. Unfortunately, obesity is associated with several comorbidity conditions, such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes, poor self-esteem, sleep apnea, and forms of depression. with obesity who were followed up to adulthood were much more likely to suffer from cardiovascular and digestive diseases. These increases in body fat expose children to a rise in the risk of a variety of forms of cancers, including breast, colon, esophageal, kidney, and pancreatic cancers (Sanyaolu, A, PhD, et al, 2019). Politicians can also enforce bans on advertising unhealthy food and drinks to children vulnerable to marketing tactics. Banning advertisements for unhealthy foods would likely lead to a fall in purchases. There are complicating factors because restricting advertising may cause companies to lower prices to encourage people to buy more products. However, it is unlikely that this would completely counteract the effects of a ban on advertisements (ABI-RAFEH, R, 2021). Obesity, especially childhood obesity, is a challenging issue to address because it involves personal self-control and parental control. However, politicians can create barriers that make it difficult for Americans to fall victim to obesity. Tax incentives for Americans who make healthy choices are a powerful tool to encourage Americans to live a healthy lifestyle.

TAX INCENTIVES FOR HEALTHY CHOICES



Healthy lifestyle tax deductions and incentives for healthier products are a deserved reward for Americans who choose to live a healthy lifestyle. Politicians should provide tax deductions or credits for individuals participating in gym memberships and wellness programs or purchase health-tracking devices. A healthy lifestyle is a personal choice. However, given the consequences of a poor lifestyle and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, it appears it is easy to have a poorer lifestyle. This is unfortunate because a healthy lifestyle can help Americans thrive as they move through their life journey. Americans can find it complicated to find the time and energy to exercise regularly or prepare healthy meals in their busy lives. However, their efforts will pay off in numerous ways for the rest of their lives. These steps include being physically active for 30 minutes most days a week, eating a well-balanced, low-fat diet, avoiding injury, not smoking or drinking in moderation, preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs), brushing teeth multiple times a day, and avoiding long-term exposure of the sun at peak hours (University of California San Francisco, n.d.). In theory, Americans who live a healthy lifestyle should not have to be rewarded by the government, but tax incentives can help many to reverse their poor lifestyle habits. Politicians can also offer incentives to food manufacturers that produce healthier versions of their products, such as reducing sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. Often, most of the focus of unhealthy consumption is geared toward sugars and salt, which should be reduced, but unhealthy fats can cause harm to the human body. Americans should monitor the kinds of fats that enter their bodies. Instead of consuming industrially produced trans fats from fast food, snack foods, fried foods, frozen pizza, pies, cookies, margarine, and spreads, it is more beneficial to shift towards unsaturated fats from fish, avocado, nuts, olive oils, and canola, and sunflower to a certain degree (World Health Organization, 2024). Companies and individuals would likely be guided to a healthier America with tax incentives to live a healthy lifestyle and healthier versions of products. Americans typically spend most of their time at work, so promoting a healthier environment will ensure that Americans engage in healthy on the clock.

Workplace and Occupational Health

Healthy work environments and paid sick leave can lead to profound outcomes in creating a healthier America. Politicians can mandate that workplaces provide environments conducive to good health, such as offering ergonomic furniture, promoting regular breaks, and providing healthy food options. An effective way to support the health and well-being of in-office employees is to limit unhealthy food and drink options. Free food is greatly appreciated, but employers should offer fresh fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods instead of packaged and processed items. Items in the workplace kitchen can help workers be more mindful of their eating and avoid food that may cause problems. Clear labels make employers provide food items more accessible to employees, especially those with religious dietary restrictions. Employers can offer challenges and incentives to make keeping up with nutrition engaging, exciting, and rewarding. Tracking and monitoring personal progress while working toward a healthier diet can create fun and friendly competition among coworkers (WellRight Inc., 2023). Politicians can also ensure that all workers have access to paid sick leave so they can take care of their health without fear of losing income. There are currently no federal legal requirements for paid sick leave. Companies subject to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) must provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for certain medical situations for the employee or member of the employee's immediate family. Employees can take FMLA leave if they have worked for their employer for at least 12 months and have worked for at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months at a location where at least 50 employees within 75 miles (U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, n.d.). There is a fine line with how much politicians should get involved in paid sick leave because it can present unnecessary costs for employers and the opportunity for employees to abuse them. This issue, perhaps, is better left in the hands of local politicians who understand their constituents as opposed to federal politicians. Now, let us discuss how Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Make America Healthy Again initiative is a formidable solution for many of the health concerns in the United States.

Make America Healthy Again (MAHA)

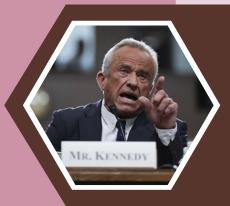


Robert F. Kennedy Jr

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human

Services

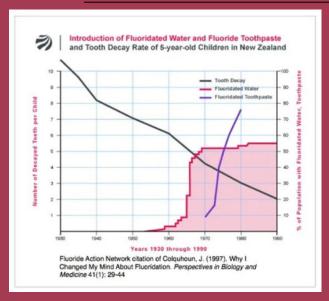
Make America Healthy Again (MAHA), led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, under President Donald J. Trump, aims to overhaul the nation's approach to health. MAHA aims to address chronic diseases, reform federal health agencies, and promote a healthier lifestyle in the United States.

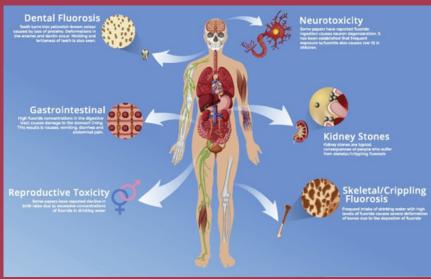


Kennedy has spent decades emphasizing the urgent need to address the rising rates of chronic conditions like ADHD, asthma, and autism. He has set a goal to identify the causes of autism by September 2025. This involves a large-scale global research initiative. The United States has seen a sharp increase in Autism diagnoses since 2000. This has intensified public concern. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. autism rate in 8-year-olds by 2020 was 1 in 36, or 2.77%. This is up from 2.27% in 2018, and 0.66% in 2000 (Aboulenein, A & Steenhuysen, J, 2025).



Significant reforms are underway within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to restructure health agencies. This includes consolidating functions to eliminate redundancy and staff reductions. There is a reorganization within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Certain divisions have been moved to a new entity focused on disease prevention. Since taking office in January 2025, the Trump administration has embarked on the dramatic downsizing of many federal agencies. This includes slashing the CDC's headcount by rounds of early retirement and layoffs. This has reduced staffing by 3,500 to 4,000 employees. Job classifications, offices, and programs have been targeted in the layoffs. Everyone at the CDC's division on dental health was axed, and most were workers at the office investigating occupational diseases and promoting job safety (Stobbe, M, 2025).





MAHA promotes nutritional reforms by advocating for healthier food choices. RFK Jr has urged states to restrict the purchase sugary of and processed foods with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. There are also efforts to ban ultra-processed foods in public schools. According to an April 10th, 2025, op-ed by U.S. health and agriculture secretaries, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and Booke Rollins, the administration has Trump called for states to request waivers barring food stamp recipients from buying soda and other processed foods 2025). The (Douglas, departments will pursue reforms to SNAP. They also called on all governors to submit waivers to restrict what **SNAP** participants can purchase.

Proposals to eliminate water fluoridation are part of the environmental health initiative. Despite opposition from many public health experts, MAHA cites the potential health risks. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral released from rocks into the soil, water, and air. All drinking water contains some

fluoride, but not enough to significantly impact health. Dental research has revealed that adjusting the fluoride level of the water supply can support improved oral health. Thus, fluoridating water became commonplace in America. Fluoride in drinking water minimizes cavities, reduces tooth decay, saves money on dental costs, and promotes public health. However, the cons of fluoride in drinking water begin with a one-sizefits-all mass medication without consent. There are challenges additional controlling dosages, fluoride is more effective through topical application, but it lacks significant ties to health, most developed nations don't fluoridate, and it's linked to many negative impacts (Quench USA, Inc., 2025). RFK Jr has praised House Bill 81, banning fluoride from public Utah. water systems in Kennedy argues that science has changed and there are harms from fluoride (Winslow, B, 2025). Utah has taken the lead on the concerns of fluoridation in water, and MAHA intends to get other states to follow.

Addressing vaccine policies is perhaps at the forefront of the MAHA agenda. Kennedy has been historically skeptical of vaccines but has endorsed the MMR vaccine amid a 2025 measles outbreak. This has led to criticism from some of his previous supporters. Kennedy has made numerous claims that the measles shot is dangerous and unnecessary, and he has sued the state of New York for vaccine mandates (Owermohle, S, 2025). Although of the measles vaccination in the past, and supporting it presently, it shows that RFK Jr has room for flexibility when presented with new information. As the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, he can lead the department in the direction and ensure that all vaccines are safe, especially for children, and are not a one-sizefits-all medical solution.

Conclusion

Politicians can steer Americans away from unhealthy lifestyles, behaviors, habits, and forces out of individual control. To start, they could enforce stricter rules on food and nutrition. They can pass legislation to encourage Americans to increase their activity. Politicians can make it more difficult for Americans to obtain harmful substances. They could promote programs that improve health education and awareness. Politicians can also make it easier for Americans to access preventative healthcare. Mental health legislation can reduce the stigma surrounding the subject. Politicians can eliminate the social determinants of health. Environmental health policies will help Americans avoid health risks they cannot control. Addressing obesity could revert Americans away from the destruction of overconsumption of harmful foods, and Americans who live a healthy lifestyle can be rewarded through tax incentives. Last, politicians can ensure that the workplace is healthy for Americans. Good health is the foundation of a quality life. Unfortunately, in America, it is too easy to make poor health choices and get trapped in financial turmoil with costly medical expenses. Maintaining good health is mostly a personal choice in collaboration with trusted doctors, but societal and environmental factors exist outside the individual choice.

Under the leadership of President Trump, Robert F. Kennedy Jr's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) initiative is promising, guiding the executive branch to take a proactive approach to many of America's health concerns. MAHA cannot solve all health concerns. Congress and the Supreme Court must play their role as well as state governments, local jurisdictions, and health agencies. Kennedy has been passionate about many of the growing health concerns in America, including the recent COVID-19 pandemic. As the Secretary of Health and Human Services, he will provide valuable insight, guided by science and updated research. He will provide leadership that will unlock the proper function of federal health agencies. With the leadership of President Trump, Kennedy will collaborate with various departments, branches of government, and state and local agencies to maximize the usage of U.S. taxpayer-funded resources.

Politicians have a key role in regulating and enforcing laws that reduce the health risks of participating in society. Although most of the responsibility falls on the individual and parents, many people need incentives to make the right choices. Politicians should reward individuals who make positive health choices while making it difficult for individuals to make poor ones. Medical costs are expensive and can be reduced and reallocated to ventures that will unlock America's true potential. Not all people will have good health, as outcomes are often out of the individual's control. However, poor habits, lifestyles, and behaviors can lead to unfavorable health outcomes. Through legislation, regulations, and restrictions that do not interfere with constitutional rights, politicians can help Americans make the best choices for themselves to earn favorable outcomes. Make America Healthy Again, the guiding light for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Trump administration, led by Robert F. Kennedy has enormous potential to make the United States of America a healthy nation again.

For more information visit www.hhs.gov and www.maha.vote

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