



February 24, 2025

Upon Senate approval of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. to serve as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the White House Issued an [Executive Order](#) (EO) establishing the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission. The EO announces that the policy of the federal government is to combat rising rates of mental health disorders, obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases in the US by directing federally funded research to focus on transparency, open-source data, and the root causes of chronic illness in the country. At first, the intergovernmental agency will focus on childhood chronic disease. Of particular concern is Section 5(iii) directing the Commission to “assess the prevalence of and threat posed by the prescription of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, stimulants, and weight-loss drugs” in children.

Kennedy has repeatedly spoken out against the use of antidepressants, antipsychotics and substance use disorder medications to treat mental health disorders including during both of his confirmation hearings where he engaged in [exchange](#) with Tina Smith (D-MN) one of the Senate Mental Health Caucus Co-chairs.

Further in his speech to HHS staff upon his arrival to the agency, he said “Some of the possible factors we will investigate were formally taboo or insufficiently scrutinized. The childhood vaccine schedule, electromagnetic radiation, glyphosate, other pesticides, ultra processed foods, artificial food additives, SSRI and other psychiatric drugs, PFAs, PFOAs, microplastics, nothing will be off limits.”

The Secretary’s remarks are concerning as they undermine the safety and efficacy of mental health medications as well as feed into stigma for those with mental health disorders who seek treatment. AAPP is very concerned about the possible actions of the MAHA Commission and is working on an official position statement and identification of coalition opportunities. AAPP will weigh in with the Commission once it is constituted and meetings begin. We will continue to monitor the Administration’s activity and continue to share developments and opportunities for member advocacy.