

White House Commission Releases Initial Chronic Disease Report

The White House's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission released its first major report on chronic disease in the country. The commission comprises around 14 officials from various federal agencies and is chaired by the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. An earlier executive order by President Donald Trump established the MAHA Commission to address life expectancy and chronic disease.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 40% of the roughly 73 million children in the United States have at least one chronic health condition, such as asthma, allergies, obesity, autoimmune diseases and behavioral disorders.

The report, titled "[Make Our Children Healthy Again: Assessment](#)," explored how technology, health and agriculture innovations have driven economic growth but also introduced health threats. Overall, the report attributed many chronic diseases to the following potential drivers:

- **Ultra-processed foods (UPFs)**—Nearly 70% of children's calories come from UPFs, which are high in added sugars, chemical additives and saturated fats.

- **Environmental chemicals**—Children are increasingly exposed to synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides, microplastics and dioxins.
- **Sedentary, technology-driven lifestyle**—Children are experiencing high levels of inactivity, screen use, sleep deprivation and chronic stress. Teens average nine hours of nonschool screen time each day, and 85% of teens didn't meet the 2024 federal minimum daily activity recommendation.
- **Medical overuse**—There are concerns about overprescribing medications, including antidepressants, ADHD medicines, asthma medications and glucagon-like peptide-1 (or GLP-1) drugs, to children.

The report also suggested that childhood vaccine schedules and clinical trial practices should be studied further.

What's Next?

The initial findings of this report have already faced industry pushback. For example, analysts have warned that policies affecting pesticides could undermine public trust in food safety and have an adverse impact on farming and agriculture. Future changes in public health policy are likely to face opposition.

At this moment, the report doesn't clearly outline changes in policy, including the cost of addressing chronic illnesses and related action steps. However, it does outline next steps, including research initiatives and potential uses of technology. Kennedy shared that, while there is no budget yet, the MAHA Commission will develop a roadmap and policy recommendations over the next 100 days. The strategy for this initiative is due in August.

Employers should continue to monitor for research updates. Contact us for more resources.