



# Speak Out Now

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## Trump Cabinet Picks: Bad for Our Health

Trump's latest Cabinet appointments reveal an administration even more determined to prioritize the wealthy and powerful at the expense of working people. His selections for key healthcare roles, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (RFK Jr.) as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Dr. Mehmet Oz to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), signal a dangerous shift that could leave millions of people's health and safety at risk.

Kennedy, a right-wing environmental lawyer with no relevant experience in public health, has made a career out of peddling dangerous conspiracy theories. He has a history of opposing vaccines and spreading misinformation, such as linking vaccines and autism. He has advocated for removing fluoride from drinking water, which could have disastrous effects on dental health, especially for those without routine access to dental care.

Kennedy has also pledged to "clear out" entire departments within the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency responsible for ensuring the safety of pharmaceuticals, food, cosmetics, and more. This action would allow corporations to cut even more corners when putting health-related products onto the market for profit. While it's true that the FDA's reliance on industry funding poses serious concerns, the solution isn't to eliminate regulations that protect public health. Under Kennedy's leadership, critical, lifesaving measures could be dismantled entirely.

Dr. Oz, a celebrity doctor with a history of promoting unproven treatments and questionable medical advice, is equally ill-suited to lead the centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. His appointment shows Trump's preference for loyalty and fame over expertise and experience in public service.

Under Dr. Oz's leadership, Trump has promised that he will "cut waste" in the department, with likely efforts to further privatize Medicare and Medicaid. This would erode vital healthcare protections and reduce regulatory oversight that ensures the safety and effectiveness of treatments. This could make healthcare even more expensive and inaccessible for working-class people.

There are also fears that Kennedy and Oz will significantly restrict access to reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare.

In addition, the Trump Administration will likely limit legal access to abortion and attempt to remove anti-discrimination healthcare protections. Women, trans people, and millions of others could be left without access to healthcare that meets their needs, even if insured.

These appointments are part of a broader pattern in Trump's Cabinet: filling positions with individuals whose interests align with the super-rich and powerful corporations, rather than ordinary people. Trump's selections for U.S. Cabinet are worth a combined \$340 billion! From dismantling public education to slashing environmental protections, this administration is laser-focused on enriching its wealthy allies while attacking the rights and welfare of working people. As mentioned in our previous editorial, Trump's Cabinet picks are likely to have disastrous effects on our lives.

The health and safety of our communities were never handed to us by politicians. They were won through the determined efforts of social movements – fighting for public health programs, workplace safety regulations, and access to affordable care. The FDA, for example, exists today because relentless organizing by journalists, scientists, and grassroots activists forced the government to create consumer protections for food and drugs. These hard-fought gains are under threat, and it's clear that we can't rely on the government to protect them.

We see the effects of healthcare privatization today: the practices of UnitedHealthcare, a health insurance giant with a high rate of claim denials, likely drove an individual to the extreme measure of assassinating the CEO. However, lone ranger attacks on individuals do not solve the system-wide stripping of our access to healthcare and are not the solution to the issues we will continue to face under Trump.

As Trump's Cabinet gears up to attack healthcare access and public safety, it's up to us to respond using our collective power. We cannot accept these cuts! We must organize to defend our rights with our neighbors, classmates, and co-workers to force them to stop. We have done it in the past and will have to do it again. Our health and safety will have to be up to us.