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CDC Shakeups

RFK Brings the Battle to Congress

By Chaya Hausmann

Since taking office as secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) in February, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has made several major changes to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC is the federal agency that provides health guidance to Americans, including which vaccines people should get. The agency has an advisory panel that has long guided the CDC on vaccine recommendations.

Kennedy's first major change was in June, when he removed all the members of the advisory panel and replaced them with a new group that included several vaccine critics. He said it was necessary to remove **conflicts of interest**¹ and ensure that vaccine guidance is reviewed fairly, without outside influence. He argued that too many lawmakers receive money from **pharmaceutical**² companies and are biased to recommend their products.

Continued on next page →

1. **conflicts of interest:** personal biases that cloud judgment

2. **pharmaceutical:** medicinal



CDC Shakeups *Continued*

On August 27, tensions grew when Kennedy fired CDC director Susan Monarez because she would not let senior staff go and refused to approve updated vaccine recommendations from the new panel. Monarez refused to step down, and many at the agency hoped that President Trump would intervene to preserve her position. Instead, the White House supported Kennedy's action, thus finalizing her dismissal. As a result, several top staff members at the CDC resigned in protest.

Kennedy also changed the guidance for the Covid vaccine. Previously, the CDC recommended the vaccine for all age groups, including children. Under the new guidance, the vaccine is not recommended for healthy children because they are the least vulnerable to Covid.

On September 4, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. appeared at a Senate hearing to explain his recent decisions. Lawmakers questioned him for three hours about his vaccine policies, the firing of the CDC director, and other changes at the agency. While some lawmakers expressed grave concerns about the direction that Kennedy was leading the agency, Kennedy maintained that the changes were necessary. The hearing ended without any action, and opinions remained divided.

Kennedy argues that vaccine recommendations should be based on scientific research, not political decisions. He says the previous advisory panel members had conflicts of interest that could have affected their decisions. Kennedy maintains that healthy children face a very low risk from Covid, making vaccination unnecessary for this group. He also argues that vaccines were rushed during the **pandemic**³ due to political pressure instead of following proper scientific testing procedures. He believes removing politics from health decisions will restore public trust in the CDC.

Medical professionals and public health experts oppose these moves. Critics say Kennedy has a long history of questioning vaccines and warn that his actions could reverse decades of work to stop the spread of preventable diseases. They argue he is overturning decisions supported by the medical community and worry that his opinions could weaken public trust in vaccines. Many health organizations have also voiced concerns that the CDC risks being seen as an anti-science agency if Kennedy fires staff who oppose his policies.

The outcome of these debates could affect public confidence in CDC guidance and how Americans follow health recommendations in the future.

3. **pandemic**: global outbreak of a disease

Review Questions



CDC Shakeups

1. What major changes did Robert F. Kennedy Jr. make at the CDC?

2. What reasons did Kennedy give for making changes at the CDC?

3. How did medical professionals react to Kennedy's changes at the CDC?



D.C. AG Wants Troops Gone

Trump's War on Crime Is Taken to Court

By Chaya Hausmann

The attorney general for Washington, D.C., is challenging President Trump's action to **federalize**⁴ the district's policing.

It all started on August 11, when President Trump announced a war against crime in the nation's capital to "make Washington, D.C., safe, clean, and beautiful again." To do this, Trump ordered more than 2,200 National Guard troops into the city to maintain order and round up criminals.

The National Guard is a branch of the military that is usually controlled by state governors but can be called into service by the president. Trump brought in soldiers from Washington, D.C., and seven other states, a very unusual course of action for a president. Since the deployment, the troops have been patrolling the streets in full uniform and driving armored vehicles.

They have also been taking part in police activities, such as neighborhood patrols, searches, and arrests. This is controversial because of a long-standing law that keeps the military separate from regular police work.

The response to the crackdown has been mixed. Some people support Trump's plan, saying they feel safer with the extra security on the streets. D.C. police reports show violent crime is at its lowest level in 30 years, which supports their claim that the troops have helped reduce crime.

But opponents are concerned that having armed soldiers on city streets could make residents distrust the police and create more tension. They say the military is supposed to fight wars and handle disasters, not arrest people in American cities.

4. **federalize**: bring under federal control

They also argue that the troops are not always focusing on violent crime and are also targeting general lawlessness, such as homeless camps.

On September 5, District Attorney General Brian Schwalb filed a lawsuit against the Trump **administration**⁵. He stated that sending troops into the city is an unwanted military occupation and that it violates the Home Rule Act, which gives the federal district the right to govern itself, similar to how a state does. Schwalb is demanding that the National Guard stop its activities and that the city's police regain control of Washington.

By law, this kind of federal deployment can only last for 30 days unless Congress agrees to extend it. However, last week, the army secretary signed an order extending the assignment through November 30.

The outcome of this case could decide how much power a president has over the use of the military in American cities.

Review Questions



D.C. AG Wants Troops Gone

1. Why did President Trump announce the “war on crime” in Washington, D.C.?

2. What was unusual about this National Guard deployment?

3. Why did Attorney General Brian Schwalb file a lawsuit against the Trump administration?

5. **administration**: management of the government



News Tidbits

By Chani Karp



Cable Car Tragedy

A tragedy occurred in Lisbon, Portugal, early Wednesday evening when one of Lisbon's funiculars lost control. Funiculars are cable railroads that help passengers climb steep hills. The funicular derailed from the track, sped down the hill, and crashed into a building, killing 16 passengers and injuring another 22 people nearby.

The funicular, one of three in Lisbon, is a popular tourist attraction. It is almost 150 years old and is constantly used by the millions of tourists who visit the beautiful city. The crash was caused by a snapped cable, leading officials to wonder whether better maintenance



could have prevented the tragedy. An investigation is underway.

Giuliani to Receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom

On September 1, President Trump announced his intention to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Rudy Giuliani. This medal is the highest honor a president can award to a civilian. It is presented to people whom the president feels have contributed significantly to the nation.

Giuliani was the mayor of New York City during the September 11, 2001, attack and oversaw the city's recovery from the destruction. His strong leadership was seen as a beacon of light in the darkness.

However, for some people, Giuliani's reputation was tarnished when he became heavily involved in Trump's attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss. Giuliani supported the president's **allegation**⁶ of widespread election fraud, including questioning the validity of electronic voting systems, despite his inability to provide sufficient evidence to back these claims in court. This led to his political decline and loss of respect by many.

Trump's announcement came after Giuliani was involved in a car accident and suffered serious injuries. The president recognized Giuliani as "the greatest mayor of NYC and an equally great **patriot**⁷."

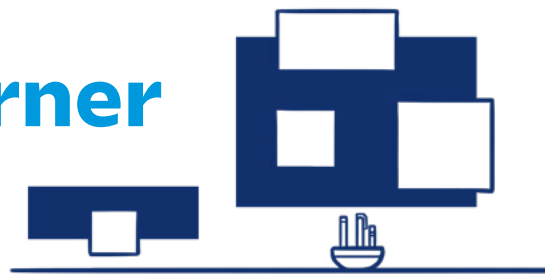
6. **allegation**: claim

7. **patriot**: person who loyally supports their country



Academic Corner

By Chani Karp



History of Vaccines

Vaccines are medicines that protect people from catching very contagious diseases. Their technology is based on how the human body combats germs. Once people catch an illness and survive, they are very unlikely to catch it again. This is because their blood now has **antibodies**⁸ to fight off the germ. A vaccine contains a weakened or dead strain of the disease, which cannot harm the person but causes the body to start producing those antibodies. This way, the next time the person is exposed to the same disease, the body is ready to fight back.

The first vaccine ever was a smallpox vaccine developed by Edward Jenner in 1796. Jenner discovered that people who contracted cowpox became **immune**⁹ to smallpox, a much deadlier disease. He injected his patients with a small amount of cowpox and succeeded in protecting them from smallpox.

Less than a century after Jenner's vaccine, vaccines were created for rabies, typhoid, and cholera. Scientists were on a mission to develop **immunizations**¹⁰ against the deadliest global diseases.



In 1945, a vaccine was finally developed for influenza ("flu"). It was the first vaccine against a virus, previously thought to be impossible.

Another major milestone was reached in 1955, when Jonas Salk's polio vaccine was declared safe for public use. Polio was a worldwide terror, unleashing outbreaks every few years that killed many people and left many more paralyzed.

Within two years, the number of annual polio cases in the U.S. had dropped by 90 percent. Numbers continued to decline worldwide as more and more countries implemented widespread vaccines. Polio was declared eradicated in the U.S. by 1979 and in Europe by 2002.

Similar success followed the launch of the measles vaccine, released in the U.S. in 1963. Since 1974, protection from measles accounts for about 60 percent of all lives saved by vaccines. But no results were more dramatic than those of the smallpox vaccine. By 1980, smallpox was declared eradicated worldwide by the World Health Organization. One of the deadliest germs to ever afflict mankind had finally become extinct.

In the last 50 years alone, vaccines have saved an estimated 154 million lives from deadly and harmful contagious diseases worldwide. That is why many countries have laws that make certain immunizations mandatory.

8. **antibodies**: proteins in the blood that fight infections

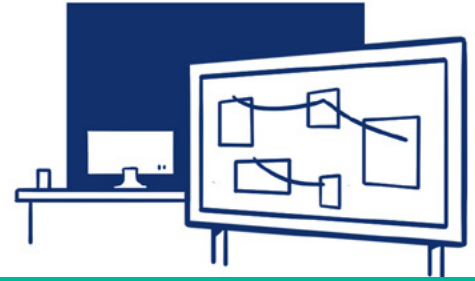
9. **immune**: protected

10. **immunizations**: vaccines



Kids' Corner

By Chani Karp



Festival of Redheads

Earlier this month, the Dutch city of Tilburg was filled with red as thousands of people from around 80 countries gathered for the annual Redhead Days Festival. The festival lasted for three days and included music, food, and workshops.

The yearly event began more than 20 years ago when Dutch artist Bart Rouwenhorst placed an ad looking for red-haired people for an art project. The response was huge, leading him to arrange a group photo. People loved it so much that he decided to organize a similar meeting the next year, and it gradually grew into the international event it is today.

In 2013, the festival made history when 1,672 redheads posed for a group photo, setting a world record.



Red hair is pretty rare, found in less than two percent of the world's population.

This year, the festival was open to anyone who wanted to celebrate redheads, regardless of their hair color. The traditional group photo, however, was reserved for redheads only.

Caterpillars In Disguise

Most caterpillars are harmless creatures that munch on leaves. But scientists in Oahu, Hawaii, have discovered a very strange caterpillar known as the bone collector.

This tiny caterpillar is about a quarter of an inch long, smaller than a grain of rice. It belongs to a group of moths found only in Hawaii. The creature likes to raid spiderwebs and sneak dead insects from their sticky ropes. After eating some of the collected goods, the bone collector sticks some body parts onto a silk case it carries on its back.

This helps it avoid detection by the spider, which thinks that it's just a dead insect and leaves it alone.

The bone collector is extremely rare and hard to spot. Only 62 have ever been found.

This Week in History

By Chani Karp

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001:

World Trade Center Attack

On this infamous day, the al-Qaeda terror group, led by Osama bin Laden, carried out a series of attacks against important buildings in the United States, most notably the Twin Towers. It was the deadliest attack on American soil in history.

At 8:14 a.m., five Islamic terrorists hijacked American Airlines Flight 11 and redirected the plane to New York City. They purposely crashed the plane into the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m. A fiery explosion rocked the tower and tore a gaping hole in the side of the building, trapping everyone above the 91st floor.



A second plane was hijacked by another five terrorists and slammed into the South Tower at 9:03 a.m. Eventually, the two buildings collapsed completely, damaging other nearby structures as well. By then, it was clear to everyone that the attacks had been intentional, and all U.S. flights were grounded.

A third plane that was already in the air was hijacked and crashed into the Pentagon, causing extensive damage to the Defense Department's headquarters. A fourth plane was crashed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after the passengers bravely fought back against the terrorists to stop another attack. It is assumed that the plane was headed for the White House or the Capitol.

In total, 2,977 people were killed in the attacks, most of them in the World Trade Center. As a shocked nation mourned the death and destruction, President Bush declared a "War on Terror." This began a drawn-out war in the Middle East against centers of Islamic terror in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries.

It took many months to clear the **debris**¹¹ from Ground Zero, the site of the Twin Towers. Eventually, a new tower was built, which now includes the National September 11 Memorial and Museum.

11. **debris**: broken pieces

September 7: In 1945, the U.S. military ended its presence in Berlin. Following Germany's surrender in 1945, the country was split and occupied by the four victorious powers.

September 8: In 1900, the "Great Storm" hit Galveston, Texas, earning the title of America's worst natural disaster ever. With winds of over 120 mph, the hurricane wreaked mass destruction, killing over 8,000 people and destroying over 2,500 buildings.

September 9: In 1776, the **Continental Congress**¹² gave the new nation the name "United States of America."

September 10: In 1846, Elias Howe of Cambridge, Massachusetts, received a patent for his new lockstitch sewing machine.

September 12: In 1962, President John F. Kennedy gave his famous speech, "We Choose to Go to the Moon," vowing that the U.S. would land a man on the moon by the end of the decade. This ambitious goal was achieved after his death in 1969.

September 13: In 1788, Congress chose New York City as the first capital of the United States. New York had been the site of congressional meetings since 1785, but it only now became the official seat of government.

12. Continental Congress: temporary government after the U.S. was formed



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