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New HHS steered by personality

Shift under Kennedy seen in health agency’s social media, press releases

Darius Tahir
KFF HEALTH NEWS

As Health and Human Services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wields one of the louder megaphones the federal government has. Yet he insists he doesn't want to impose his opinions on Americans.

“I don’t think people should be taking medical advice from me,” Kennedy told

a Democratic congressman in May. Kennedy once expressed different views – for example, the need to proselytize about exercise. As he said on a podcast, he wants to use the “bully pulpit” to “obliterate the delicacy” with which Americans discuss fitness and explain that “suffering” is virtuous.

“We need to establish an ethic that

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At least four polls since January show trust in Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as a medical adviser is low. In one poll, from The Economist and YouGov, barely over a quarter of respondents said they trusted Kennedy “a lot” or “somewhat.”

ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



President Donald Trump and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth have suggested that military strikes on Venezuelan soil could be coming. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Data: Venezuela not a major source of deadly fentanyl

Trump critics say order bypasses Congress by conflating issue

Josh Meyer
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump and his top aides have justified lethal military strikes on suspected drug smuggling boats from Venezuela, by accusing Venezuela and alleged criminal networks operating on its soil like the Cartel de los Soles of flooding the United States with deadly drugs.

“This mission defends our Homeland, removes narco-terrorists from our Hemisphere, and secures our Homeland from the drugs that are killing our people,” Secretary of War (formally known as Secretary of Defense) Pete Hegseth said Nov. 13.

In August, the United States doubled the reward for information leading to the capture of Venezuelan President Ni-

Instead of asking for a “declaration of war” from Congress, Trump said, “I think we’re just gonna kill people that are bringing drugs into our country. ... They’re going to be, like, dead.”

colás Maduro to an unprecedented \$50 million over allegations of drug trafficking and links to criminal groups. Attorney General Pam Bondi explained the bounty at the time by accusing Maduro in a video message of being “one of the largest narco-traffickers in the world and a threat to our national security.”

That’s reason enough, Trump and administration officials say, for launching U.S. military attacks that have killed at least 87 people in recent months – in-

cluding two men clinging to wreckage after they survived an initial Sept. 2 strike that killed nine other people . They say it even warrants a potential attack on Venezuelan soil, which Trump has implied may be in the offing.

U.S. and United Nations drug data, however, show Venezuela isn’t a producer or exporter of fentanyl, a lab-made synthetic opioid, and that it plays a relatively minor role in the far less-lethal cocaine trade.

Venezuela does not produce fentanyl

“Every boat kills 25,000 on average – some people say more,” Trump told U.S. military generals in September. “You see these boats, they’re stacked up with bags of white powder that’s mostly fentanyl and other drugs, too.”

But Mexico is the primary – and virtually only – mass producer and

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Japanese “kei” cars are made by a variety of Japanese automakers primarily for sale in Asia. Sam Abuelsamid, vice president of market research at Telemetry, said the vehicles have strict dimensional limits, so they all look like tiny boxes.

EDGAR SU/REUTERS FILE

Analysts: Trump’s ‘tiny car’ unlikely

Jamie L. LaReau
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

DETROIT – The auto executives representing the Detroit Three stood in the Oval Office stone-faced, softly nodding as President Donald Trump proposed on Dec. 3 that they start thinking about making tiny, inexpensive cars for the U.S. market that are similar to ones popular in Japan.

It’s an idea that likely will never

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