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The Progress-Index

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2026 | PROGRESS-INDEX.COM

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Kennedy launches new push on vaccine injuries



Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who spent years questioning vaccine safety and founded an anti-vaccine group before taking office, has taken steps to reshape federal immunization policy. KYLIE COOPER/REUTERS FILE

HHS to study, document reported health problems

Ahmed Aboulenein
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. last week launched an agencywide effort to study and document any health problems reported after vaccination, the Department of Health and Human Services said on Oct. 8.

The initiative is the latest step by Kennedy, who spent years questioning vaccine safety and founded an anti-vaccine group before taking office, to reshape federal immunization policy. The American Academy of Pediatrics says childhood vaccines are studied in placebo-controlled and comparison-group trials and monitored for safety after approval.

The federal Vaccine Injury Table lists 14 compensable injuries across 16 vaccine types under the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, a no-fault system in which claimants file against the government, not vaccine makers. Since 1988, it has awarded roughly \$5 billion across about 12,300 injury and death claims.

The new moves, which appear to be part of Kennedy’s decadeslong efforts

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Green-card program targeted by Trump

Major tech companies suspended from PERM

Deborah Mary Sophia
and Jaspreet Singh
REUTERS

The U.S. government said on Oct. 8 that it is suspending some major global tech and IT firms, including Microsoft and Cognizant, from a key green-card program that allows skilled foreign workers to gain permanent residency through their employment. Senior U.S. officials cited alleged fraud as the reason behind the move, saying companies have been using the program to replace American workers with cheaper foreign workers. It comes as the latest step in the Trump administration’s crackdown on skilled foreign labor.

What is under suspension?

The suspension is targeting a key employer-sponsorship mechanism, called the Permanent Labor Certification or PERM, which is used by major technology companies and outsourcing firms. The U.S. government said that for certain companies, it would not accept any new PERM applications or process any pending ones. PERM went into effect in 2005, aiming to speed up the long processing times experienced under the previous paper-based “Alien Employment Certification” program. Under PERM, the Labor Department allows an employer to sponsor a foreign worker’s permanent residency. The process is initiated by qualified U.S. employers, and not individual workers. The Labor Department must certify to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that there are not enough U.S. workers who are qualified and available for a given job opportunity, and that the employment of the foreign worker will not affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed Americans.

See **PROGRAM**, Page 2A

Friend says he warned teenager not to hack FBI

Raphael Satter
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – A friend of the suspected thief of a massive cache of personal data from the FBI says he begged the teenager not to do it. Adem El Adeb, 19, told Reuters that he tried to convince Saif al-Din Khader that breaking into the FBI would bring the weight of the U.S. government down on his shoulders but that Khader would not be swayed. “You’re suicidal,” El Adeb recalled telling Khader in an early September message exchange. He said he told the

teen he was “crazy” and that he should drop the idea. “Not only once. Multiple times. I tried to advise him.” The hack claimed by the ShinyHunters hacking group, which Khader is alleged to have played a key role in, has rocked the bureau. Reuters has not independently verified the scope of the breach, but the FBI has told staffers it is operating under the assumption the stolen data pertains to all its employees, a person briefed on the matter told Reuters in September. The FBI did not return a message

See **FBI**, Page 2A



Young cybercriminals formed Hellcat and went on a digital rampage, breaking into organizations around the world. KACPER PEMPEL/REUTERS ILLUSTRATION, FILE

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Volume 160 | No. 255
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