

**HIV-Related Written Q&As from Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
HHS Secretary Confirmation Hearing January 29, 2025**

Questions from Sen. Ron Wyden

Question 27: The annual budget of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases advances critical research; examples include the successful development of new vaccines against RSV, an FDA-approved drug that delays the onset of Type 1 Diabetes, an mRNA vaccine against HIV, and more. Please explain why you plan to stop this work and who it will benefit?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to evaluating all agencies and programs to ensure that they are accomplishing the mission of making Americans healthy again.

In your 2021 book *The Real Anthony Fauci*, you wrote, “any questioning of the orthodoxy that HIV is the sole cause of AIDS remains an unforgivable—even dangerous—heresy among our reigning medical cartel and its media allies.” You have also said that HIV is caused by “poppers” (amyl nitrite) and other environmental reasons. And, just a couple of years ago, in a 2023 *New York Magazine* interview you are quoted as saying, “They were doing phony, crooked studies to develop a cure that killed people without really being able to understand what HIV was, and pumping up fear about it constantly, not really understanding whether it was causing AIDS.”

Question 144: Do you still support these statements?

Response: I believe HIV causes AIDS.

Question 145: Do you agree that the HIV virus causes the infectious disease that leads to AIDS?

Response: Yes, in most cases.

Question 146: Will you commit to fully funding the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program?

Response: If confirmed, HHS will implement laws passed by Congress, including appropriations laws, which includes designated funding levels for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program.

Question 147: Will you commit to supporting a robust prevention program at the CDC that includes pre-exposure prophylaxis?

Response: If confirmed, HHS will support all appropriate prevention programs, including those which include pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Question 148: Will you commit to investing in HIV research programs at the NIH?

Response: If confirmed, my goal is for NIH to be the global leader in breakthrough, transparent research accountable to the American people.

PrEP medications have been shown to successfully reduce the risk of acquiring HIV through sexual contact by over 99% and are a major component of the national strategy to reduce HIV. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force has given PrEP a grade A recommendation, which under the ACA requires insurers to cover it without patient cost-sharing. Today PrEP is either a once daily oral or a bimonthly injection, and the FDA is expected to approve a twice-yearly injection later this year.

Question 149: Under your leadership, will HRSA and the CDC continue to support activities to promote and increase PrEP usage, particularly for those individuals who need it but are not currently accessing it?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the good work that President Trump did in his pursuit to eradicate HIV/AIDS.

Question 150: If confirmed, would you make sure that insurers cover all forms of PrEP without cost-sharing?

Response: I am committed to improving healthcare quality and outcomes for all Americans. If confirmed, I will work to address barriers to coverage and promote broader access to affordable, high quality health coverage that best meets the needs of individuals and their families.

Question 239: You claimed that Medicaid has been expanded beyond its original “target population of the poorest Americans.” What percentage of non-elderly adults with Medicaid have a disability, but do not have Supplemental Security Income and thus cannot qualify on the basis of disability? What percentage of non-elderly adults with Medicaid have a mental health or substance use disorder? What percentage of non-elderly adults with HIV have Medicaid coverage? Do you think expanding Medicaid helps these populations? Do you believe pursuing cuts of up to one-third of federal Medicaid spending will have an impact on these populations?

Response: If confirmed, I will work to foster an affordable, accessible, high quality health care system that best meets the needs of individuals and their families and ensure the Medicaid program provides a strong safety net for America’s most vulnerable populations.

Questions from Sen. Elizabeth Warren

Question 86: You claimed that HIV does not cause AIDS. Do you still believe this? Will you support a national strategy to end the HIV epidemic and oppose efforts to cut funds for the HIV epidemic?

Response: I have never said that HIV does not cause AIDS.

Question 87: In your book “The Real Anthony Fauci,” you wrote that you take “no position” on whether HIV causes AIDS, and on other occasions, you have suggested that “poppers” and “the gay lifestyle” played a role in AIDS-related deaths. Last year, a seventh person was reported as cured of HIV, and many Americans, especially those in the LGBTQ+ community, are hopeful that we might eventually develop a cure for this devastating disease. If confirmed as Health Secretary, would you halt federal funding of this potentially lifesaving research? Would you undertake any actions that could disrupt Americans’ access to existing HIV medication like PrEP?

Response: I would continue HIV/AIDS research.

Questions from Sen. Raphael Warnock

Question 63: Overdose rates in the United States have declined significantly between June 2023 and June 2024 after strong investments from the federal government in increasing access evidence-based interventions like naloxone and medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder.¹ If confirmed as HHS Secretary, how will help continue this downward trend in overdose deaths in the US while also preventing the spread of HIV and viral hepatitis among

people who use drugs?

Response: If confirmed, I will work with experts and professional staff at SAMHSA and agencies across the government to quickly get up-to-speed on federal programs that prevent overdose as well as the spread of HIV and viral hepatitis among people who use drugs.

Question 91: President Trump’s Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. initiative aims to reduce new HIV infections by 90 percent by 2030.ⁱⁱ How will you ensure the initiative achieves its goals?

Response: The United States has been making progress toward ending the HIV Epidemic since the 1980s. If confirmed, I look forward to working with key leaders in HHS to develop metrics that can help advance a response in keeping with the President’s promise.

Links

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ⁱ Kerry Breen, Overdose deaths in the U.S. fell 17% in 1-year period, CDC says, CBS News, Dec. 12, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/overdose-deaths-fall-united-states-cdc-report/>

ⁱⁱ Ending the HIV Epidemic in the US, CDC, Mar. 20, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/ehe/php/about/index.html#:~:text=Ending%20the%20HIV%20epidemic%20in%20the%20US%20by%202030,HIV%20prevention%20and%20treatment%20strategies>