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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Kaul Sues to Stop Dismantling of Health and Human Services
Department**

***HHS cuts threaten Wisconsin efforts to remove lead in Milwaukee schools,
reduce maternal deaths, and prevent youth tobacco use***

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today joined 19 attorneys general in filing a [lawsuit](#) against Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other Trump administration officials to stop the dismantling of HHS.

Since taking office, Secretary Kennedy and the Trump administration have fired thousands of federal health workers, shuttered vital programs, and abandoned statutorily-required support to the states in critical areas, such as abating lead poisoning risk in Milwaukee schools, tracking and reducing maternal death, and discouraging tobacco product use by young people. The attorneys general argue that Secretary Kennedy and the Trump administration have robbed HHS of the resources necessary to effectively serve the American people and will be asking the court to halt further dismantling and restore key program operations.

“A dangerous mix of conspiracy theories and the extreme ideology reflected by DOGE are causing a staggering amount of damage to the extraordinarily important work of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, resulting in increased and unnecessary risk to people’s health and wellbeing,” said AG Kaul. “This and other lawsuits we’ve joined are seeking to stem the harm. But it’s also critical for Congress to get off the sidelines and help stop HHS from continuing down this senseless course.”

On March 27, Secretary Kennedy revealed a dramatic restructuring of HHS as part of the president's "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE) initiative. The secretary announced that the department's 28 agencies would be collapsed into 15, with many surviving offices shuffled or split apart. He also announced mass firings, slashing the department's headcount from 85,000 to 65,000. On April 1, 10,000 HHS employees across the nation were terminated. Half of HHS's regional offices were closed, including offices in Boston, Chicago, Dallas, New York City, San Francisco and Seattle.

In the lawsuit, the attorneys general argue that these changes threaten to undermine the nation's health system. Workers across the country can no longer reliably access N95 masks following the closure of the nation's only federal mask approval laboratory. Key Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) infectious disease laboratories have also been shuttered, including those responsible for testing and tracking measles, effectively halting the federal government's ability to monitor the disease nationwide.

Hundreds of employees working on mental health and addiction treatment, including half of the entire workforce at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), have been fired, and all SAMHSA regional offices are now closed. The World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP), which provides life-saving care to more than 137,000 9/11 first responders and survivors, stands to lose the doctors needed to certify new cancer diagnoses, leaving American heroes without access to the health care they deserve. Pregnant women and newborns are now at risk after the firing of the entire CDC maternal health team.

AG Kaul and the coalition argue that these sweeping actions are in clear violation of hundreds of federal statutes and regulations, and that the Trump administration does not have the authority to make these reckless changes. The attorneys general allege that by taking these actions without congressional approval, the administration is disregarding the constitutional separation of powers and undermining the laws and budgets enacted by Congress to protect public health. Since its founding, HHS has worked to protect and advance the health and well-being of all Americans. The attorneys general assert that now, under this recent restructuring, that mission is in jeopardy.

On April 1, AG Kaul joined a coalition of 23 attorneys general in filing a lawsuit against Secretary Kennedy and the Trump administration for abruptly and unlawfully slashing billions of dollars in vital state health funding. On April 4, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order against the Administration, temporarily reinstating that funding.

Joining AG Kaul in this lawsuit, which is being led by New York Attorney General Letitia James, Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha, and Washington Attorney General Nick Brown, are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawai'i, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, and the District of Columbia.