



Stop the Coup 2025
a public education and mobilization campaign

Chapter 14. Department of Health and Human Services.

Author: Roger Severino, *Vice President of Domestic Policy at The Heritage Foundation; director of the Office for Civil Rights at the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from 2017 to 2021.*

Chapter 14 is one of the central departments in the remaking of the government, due to what Severino labels a crisis that threatens America’s long-term survival: a “precipitous drop in life expectancy” with “white populations alone losing 7 percent of their expected life span in just one year.” Severino proposes that HHS be renamed the **Department of Life**, and the new Secretary should install a pro-life task force of political appointees to ensure that the mission furthers the health and well-being of all Americans “from conception to natural death.”

To that end, Severino enumerates every area of the department’s work where abortion can be removed from the mission. He also notes every area where faith-based programming can be promoted, and outlines specific regulations that must be changed to accommodate religious exceptions (for example, allow adoption agencies to refuse to consider same-sex couples).

Severino emphasizes the department’s role in championing heteronormative marriage, under what he calls the Family Agenda: “The Secretary’s anti-discrimination policy statements should never conflate sex with gender identity or sexual orientation. Rather, the Secretary should proudly state that men and women are biological realities that are crucial to the advancement of life sciences and medical care and that married men and women are the ideal, natural family structure.” Gender-affirming care, like abortion, is labeled as harmful.

The chapter also addresses programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act; Severino argues for competitive market-based revisions and a general policy of leaving individuals to make their own health care choices; for Medicaid, work requirements and eligibility would be reviewed. In the same spirit of freedom, he proposes restructuring the CDC and NIH so that vaccine and mask mandates would no longer be part of public health policy.

STC 2025 Commentary: Here, Severino presents a radical, politicized plan to transform the Department of Health and Human Services into a department ruled by Christian religious values -- the opposite of “religious freedom,” since imposing those values affects everyone in the US. The plan also shreds the concept of public health, which relies on individuals agreeing to certain regulations for the benefit of the entire community.

*This chapter is complex, but has **four main goals:***

- ✓ First and foremost, enshrine anti-abortion policy in every single aspect of the department’s purview
- ✓ Weaken Medicare and Medicaid protections under the guise of “consumer choice”
- ✓ Use a biblical definition of marriage, and promote marriage wherever possible

- ✓ Enshrine a binary definition of sex as the law of the land; label nonbinary gender and trans issues as harmful and unacceptable

Chapter 14 - Key Points:

- ✓ Rename HHS the 'Department of Life,' and center it around an anti-abortion agenda

On abortion, fertility, marriage, family

- ✓ Abortion is not health care (it harms women and girls)
- ✓ Ban Mifepristone and outlaw mailing it
- ✓ Ban the morning-after pill
- ✓ Remove all funding from Planned Parenthood
- ✓ Prevent Medicaid from paying for abortions
- ✓ Promote the rhythm method for contraception (fertility awareness-based methods)
- ✓ Ban fertility treatments such as three-person embryo creation
- ✓ Marriage and family should be defined by the Bible

On Sex, Gender

- ✓ Sex is binary; any challenge to this is "junk science"
- ✓ Gender affirming care causes "irreversible physical and mental harm"

On Insurance

- ✓ Turn Medicare into a free market program
- ✓ Make people pay for some care under Medicaid
- ✓ Put lifetime caps on Medicaid benefits