Vaccine Challenges in a New Administration

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April 13, 2017
VACCINE SAFETY: HERE WE GO AGAIN.....?

• Anti-vaccine groups are “excited” about a Trump presidency.

• Donald Trump has questioned the safety and timing of vaccines.

• Robert Kennedy Jr making news with claims of a possible commission on vaccine safety – and continuing to link thimerosal and autism.

• Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, is being pressured to hold hearings on vaccines.
DONALD TRUMP PRE-CANDIDACY TWEETS

- Alarmed about the increase in autism rates
- Complains about doctor-inflicted autism
- Complains about “massive” vaccinations as the cause of autism
Donald Trump at CNN Republican Primary Debate – Sep. 16. 2015

“Autism has become an epidemic. Twenty-five years ago, 35 years ago, you look at the statistics, not even close. It has gotten totally out of control....

....I am totally in favor of vaccines. But I want smaller doses over a longer period of time... and I had my children taken care of over a long period of time, over a two or three year period of time...

...but you take this little beautiful baby, and you pump - I mean, it looks just like it's meant for a horse, not for a child, and we've had so many instances, people that work for me...

.....Just the other day, two years old, two and a half years old, a child, a beautiful child went to have the vaccine, and came back, and a week later got a tremendous fever, got very, very sick, now is autistic.”
Candidate Trump Meets with Andrew Wakefield

• In September 2016, two months before the election, Candidate Trump met with Andrew Wakefield and other vaccine skeptics.

• In media interview, Wakefield said “For the first time in a long time, I feel very positive about this, because Donald Trump is not beholden to the pharmaceutical industry. He didn’t rely upon [drug makers] to get him elected. And he’s a man who seems to speak his mind and act accordingly. So we shall see.”
Robert Kennedy Jr. meets President-elect Trump

On January 10, Robert Kennedy Jr. meets with President-elect Trump at Trump Tower

- Kennedy told press afterwards that the President-elect asked him to chair a new commission on “vaccine safety and scientific integrity.”

- Trump Transition team states later the same day that the President-elect only spoke about a commission on autism.
ROBERT KENNEDY JR AND ROBERT DE NIRO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB – FEB. 15

• Announces $100,000 reward “to the first journalist, or other individual, who can find a peer-reviewed scientific study demonstrating that thimerosal is safe in the amounts contained in vaccines currently being administered to American children and pregnant women.”

• Kennedy says he has spoken with people from the Trump Team 3-4 times about the supposed vaccine safety commission.

• Del Bigtree, producer of “Vaxxed,” attends and speaks.

• Congressional briefing the next day is sparsely attend – De Niro does not attend.
"Revolution for Truth" Rally on March 31

- Sponsored by the World Mercury Project, Focus for Health, A Voice for Choice, Vaccine-Injury Awareness League and National Vaccine Information Center.

- A new group, Honesty in Media, releases a letter to President Trump at a press conference at the National Press Club that is signed by nearly 275 doctors, scientists and health-related organizations expressing support for a vaccine safety commission.

- A rally takes place at the J.W. Marriott with speakers like Dr. Paul Thomas, Dr. Toni Bark, Dr. Brian Hooker, Dr. Judy Mikovits, Del Bigtree, and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. voicing support for a vaccine safety commission.

- Very little press coverage
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

- Chaired by Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)

  - Filmed at a campaign fundraiser talking to anti-vaccine activists and agreeing that more research is needed

  - Getting pressure by some of his constituents to hold hearings on vaccine safety, NVICP, and the “CDC Whistleblower.”

  - While Chaffetz is sympathetic to claims made by anti-vaccine constituents, his committee staff says they have no plans for now on holding any hearings on this topic.
COORDINATED RESPONSE IS CRUCIAL

• On January 10, after Kennedy meets with President-elect Trump, AAP issues a statement declaring vaccines are safe, vaccines are effective, vaccines save lives.

• On February 7, a letter is sent to President Trump signed by AAP and over 350 other national and State organizations that expresses unequivocal support for the safety of vaccines.

• Continual outreach to Rep. Chaffetz’s office and Oversight and Government Reform Committee members.

• Regular meetings with pro-vaccine organizations to share information, coordinate strategy and messaging.