

RFK Jr. Asks Governors To Share Medicaid Data

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HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wants governors to share their state's Medicaid data so his department can use it to track health outcomes of particular drugs like the weight loss medications known as GLP-1s or the anti-depression medications known as SSRIs. Three GOP governors have agreed to provide the information to HHS so far, according to Kennedy, who says the data will also be available to researchers – after being scrubbed of personal details.

Kennedy made his request during the National Governors Association summer meeting on July 26. He said it's difficult to do longitudinal studies on potential environmental injuries since most of the data comes from private insurance plans, where the average patient enrollment period is two years.

“The only system that really has that is Medicaid,” Kennedy told governors. “Medicaid follows people for 10 years from zero to 18. Oh, it is the highest quality data that we have, but we don't control it at HHS, it's controlled by the states, and we're now making agreements with the states.” Kennedy said Indiana Gov. Mike Braun, Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry and Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, all Republicans, have agreed to start sharing their Medicaid data, which HHS plans to depersonalize and share via a public database so independent scientists can review it.

“[HHS will] allow independent scientists to actually study it and research it, and that is going to enable you to do more targeted treatment in your state,” Kennedy said. “There's a huge advantage in the state doing this, and then we can also have the advantages of these giant data systems that will really allow us to look across the landscape and say, do statins really work? Do SSRIs really work? Is Metformin better than GLPs? And what are the advantages if there's five different GLP drugs or diabetes drugs?”

“Let's look at the long-term health outcomes of those and see which one of them has the lowest all-cause mortality and the highest efficacy. And we can't do that right now,” he added.