

## **RFK Jr. Slashes Funding for the American Academy of Pediatrics**

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The US Department of Health and Human Services has terminated millions of dollars in grants for the American Academy of Pediatrics, including research into reducing sudden infant death syndrome and the early identification of autism.

“The sudden withdrawal of these funds will directly impact and potentially harm infants, children, youth, and their families in communities across the United States,” AAP Chief Executive Officer Mark Del Monte said Wednesday in a statement. The AAP is looking into legal action, he said.

The professional group that represents doctors who care for children has harshly criticized HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for changes to US vaccine policy since he took the helm at the nation’s top health agency. HHS confirmed the cuts.

“These grants, previously awarded to the American Academy of Pediatrics, were canceled along with a number of other grants to other organizations because they no longer align with the Department’s mission or priorities,” HHS spokesperson Andrew Nixon said in a statement.

The AAP received at least \$18 million in the past year from HHS, according to a federal spending database. It held at least 16 grants for fiscal year 2025 across the government. It was not immediately clear the exact amount the seven terminated grants totaled.

Kennedy and the AAP have clashed throughout the year, culminating in lawsuits and differing vaccine guidance. The pediatric group has called Kennedy’s actions unscientific, claimed he sidelined medical experts and charged him with eroding public health in the US.

The AAP also pulled its participation from a federal vaccine advisory committee after Kennedy fired all 17 of its members earlier this year. The pediatric group issued its own vaccine guidance that countered what HHS endorsed. Kennedy has claimed that the organization receives federal funding from pharmaceutical companies and vaccine manufacturers.

The AAP maintains that it has no conflicts of interest and said it has been making vaccine recommendations since before the federal government started issuing guidance.

Other programs that were supported by the now terminated grants included adolescent health, mental health, access to rural care, supporting children with birth defects and the prevention of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, Del Monte said.

The group and other professional medical organizations are suing Kennedy in federal court for changing the makeup of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and for its subsequent vote to alter access to Covid immunizations. Kennedy's hand-chosen replacements for the panel include several vaccine critics.

The organization of more than 67,000 pediatricians across the US learned about the terminated grants earlier in the week. The Washington Post first reported the cuts.