



May 5, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
US Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We are writing in support of the goals of the Make America Healthy Again initiative, specifically in regard to sleep and circadian health. *Sleep health and 24-hour (circadian) rhythms are critically important in promoting good health and safety, and preventing and managing chronic disease.* We offer our support and expertise to you and other members of the MAHA Commission as you work to craft priorities, activities, and goals.

We represent five organizations who serve clinicians, scientists, patients, industry collaborators, and the public at large - all with a common focus on sleep and circadian rhythms. The past 50 years have witnessed an explosion of knowledge in these areas. We now know, for instance, that:

- Sleep is an active process that promotes optimal physical, mental, and cognitive health, including attention and performance
- Good sleep is necessary for healthy development in childhood and adolescence, and for healthy aging during adulthood
- Virtually every physical function in humans (and animals) is regulated by circadian rhythms
- Circadian rhythms are present in every cell of our bodies, are controlled by “clock” genes, and are synchronized to the daily light-dark cycle

Perhaps most critical to the MAHA campaign, we know that healthy sleep and circadian rhythms promote healthy metabolism and immune function and prevent inflammation. Healthy sleep and rhythms play a key role in preventing and treating chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, auto-immune disorders, and even cancer. Healthy sleep and rhythms are even associated with lower mortality rates. Clearly, disturbed sleep and rhythms are among the root causes for why Americans are getting sick. In fact, the American Heart Association (AHA) now recognizes sleep as one of “Life’s Essential 8” health behaviors for preventing cardiovascular disease.

Our organizations have also made important advances in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders and the promotion of healthy sleep. Sleep health is an integral component of a healthy lifestyle: Not only is healthy sleep one of Life’s Essential 8, but it is intrinsically related to other health behaviors such as healthy diet, physical activity, and stress. Notably, effective treatments for sleep and circadian disorders include cognitive behavioral treatment plans for optimizing sleep-wake patterns and natural interventions such as timed light exposure, all of which are based on our understanding of physiology. We support the MAHA Commission’s goal of ensuring insurance coverage for lifestyle interventions focused on disease prevention and note the importance of interventions to address sleep. We also recognize that access to medical treatments such as positive airway pressure, approved devices, and medications is important for many patients with sleep disorders.



We would also like to emphasize the following information on sleep and circadian rhythms, specific to the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) role in the MAHA Commission. The NIH supports sleep research across 23 institutes and centers, coordinated by the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research (NCSDR) Sleep Disorders Research Advisory Board (SDRAB). In FY2023, NIH awarded 1,247 grants totaling roughly \$580 million across 246 institutions for sleep and circadian research. This broad support across NIH indicates the critical role that sleep and circadian rhythms play in promoting health and function across all levels of biological organization, from genes and molecules to organs and systems to population health.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the critical support for sleep and circadian research through agencies including the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, and Veteran's Administration. In particular, the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research has played a vital role in promoting sleep and circadian research across the population. We fully support the MAHA Commission's call for transparency in federally-funded research, including the availability of open-source data. The National Sleep Research Resource, funded by NIH, is an outstanding example of how shared sleep data can be used to improve the nation's health. We hope that you continue to support research funding that helps to make Americans healthy.

Again, we offer our support and the support of our organizations in the MAHA Commission's work, and we thank you for being part of this important endeavor. Moreover, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your colleagues (virtually or in person) to discuss shared priorities and collaborative opportunities. Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Buysse, MD  
President  
Sleep Research Society

Eric Olson, MD  
President  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Steven Lerman, MD, MPH  
Chair  
National Sleep Foundation

S. Justin Thomas, PhD  
President  
Society for Behavioral Sleep Medicine

John B. Hogenesch, PhD  
President  
Society for Research on Biological Rhythms

CC:

The Honorable Martin A. Makary, MD, MPH, Commissioner, US Food and Drug Administration  
The Honorable Jayanta Bhattacharya, M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health  
The Honorable Mehmet Oz, MD, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
The Honorable Susan Monarez, PhD, Acting Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
The Honorable Michael Kratsios, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy