Summary

Dr. Stephanie Haridopolos, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor in the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, joined John Clymer to discuss how the *Making America Healthy Again (MAHA)* initiative can elevate national hypertension prevention efforts. She emphasized early intervention, lifestyle change, the importance of empowering patients, and the role of policy and public engagement in addressing chronic disease. Drawing on her experience in Florida, personal story, and leadership in children's health, she highlighted how MAHA will integrate upstream, practical strategies to prevent hypertension and related diseases across all age groups.

Key Points & Takeaways

Early Intervention & Prevention

- **Start early**: Blood pressure screening should begin at **age 3** during wellness exams.
- Focus on **lifestyle modifications first** (diet, exercise, stress reduction) before medications.
- Haridopolos' personal story of surviving open-heart surgery as a child drives her empathy and commitment to **early, accessible care**.

Children's Health as a Foundation

- Expanded CHIP eligibility in Florida from 200% to 300% of FPL, increasing access for **80,000 children**.
- **MAHA will prioritize youth health**: A new **President's Youth Fitness Program** and **sports-focused decade initiative** will promote movement, reduce screen time, and celebrate sports role models.

MAHA: A Bold National Strategy

- Announced in a **February 13 Executive Order**, MAHA aims to:
    - Address **ultra-processed food consumption**
    - Remove **petroleum-based food dyes**
    - Reevaluate **dietary guidelines** (due by end of 2025)
    - Relaunch the **President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition**

    - Release **MAHA Commission Reports** on May 24 (first 100 days) and August (strategic plan)

Tackling Hypertension Holistically

- MAHA focuses on **root causes** of hypertension, not just symptoms.
- Includes public awareness campaigns featuring **visual storytelling**, story-banking, and **pictorial messages** to reach broader audiences.
- Emphasis on **common-sense public health** solutions and **community empowerment**.

The Vaping Epidemic & Youth Risk

- Haridopolos raised concern about the **resurgence of youth vaping**, linking it to increased heart rate and blood pressure.
- Called for stronger awareness and regulatory efforts to **prevent hypertension from developing early** in life.

Notable Quotes

- *"Uncovering the silent killer... We don't like saying that, but it's true."*
- *"A picture says a thousand words."*
- *"I started life as a patient... That empathy has never left me."*
- *"I want to be proactive, not just treat disease. We must empower patients with knowledge."*
- *"We need to step back and ask: What are the common-sense initiatives that can make America healthy again?"*
- *"I hope to carry the torch nationally on youth vaping prevention."*