Kathleen Sebelius

Former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The leading voice on healthcare in America.

Kathleen Sebelius is one of America’s leading voices on health policy, health care reform, and human service delivery. From April 2009 through June 2014, she served in President Barack Obama’s Cabinet as Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, where she oversaw a trillion-dollar budget and a staff of nearly 90,000 employees.
The agencies in the Department include the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the Office of the Surgeon General, the Office of Head Start, and numerous others.

From 2003 to 2009, Sebelius served as Governor of Kansas, where she was named one of America’s Top Five Governors by TIME magazine. From 1995 to 2003 she served as the elected Insurance Commissioner of Kansas. Before serving in statewide office, Sebelius served four terms in the Kansas Legislature.

Sebelius has led ambitious efforts to provide all Americans with the opportunity to live happier, healthier, and more successful lives: from her high-profile work on the Affordable Care Act; to her national leadership on early childhood initiatives, women’s health, tobacco control, and mental health parity; to her global leadership on issues like HIV/AIDS, polio, prevention of chronic diseases, and global health security.

She has touched millions of lives through her work to deliver services to some of our country’s most vulnerable populations, including Americans living with disabilities, seniors, children, First Americans, LGBT populations and refugees. Under her leadership, the Department of Health and Human Services launched a comprehensive effort to close health disparities for minority and marginalized populations.

As secretary, Sebelius led the President’s charge for the passage of the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”), the most significant health reform in half a century. After the bill became law in 2010, she led implementation efforts, which included a Patient’s Bill of Rights for already-insured Americans, a multi-sector effort focusing on disease prevention, the strengthening of Medicare by adding benefits and lowering costs, expansion of CHIP and Medicaid, and the creation of a new national Health Insurance Marketplace, which enrolled 8 million consumers in 2014.

Also as secretary, Sebelius launched reforms to our nation’s health delivery system that are already improving the quality of care patients receive while driving down costs. She championed health care providers’ conversion to electronic health records and led efforts to unlock and use Department of Health and Human Services data to drive innovation and empower consumers.

Sebelius has championed new public-private strategies to bring life-saving drugs and devices to market and to accelerate the microscope-to-marketplace pipeline for new cures. During her tenure as secretary, she oversaw the development of a 21st century food safety system and the establishment of new regulatory authority over tobacco products.

She was in charge of the nation’s public health response to natural disasters as well as emerging epidemics, including the Haiti earthquake and the H1N1 flu outbreak.

Forbes named Sebelius one of the 100 most powerful women in the world.

Sebelius is the first daughter of a governor to have been elected governor in American history; her father John Gilligan served as Governor of Ohio from 1971 to 1975. She holds a master of public administration degree from the University of Kansas and a bachelor of arts degree from Trinity Washington University.