



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on March 25, 2025

Trump Nominates Biotech Insider Susan Monarez to Lead CDC

President Donald Trump has nominated Dr. Susan Monarez, currently the acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for CDC director. This decision comes after the withdrawal of his initial nominee, Dr. David Weldon, a former Florida congressman known for his anti-establishment stance in medicine. Weldon's nomination was reportedly retracted due to insufficient support in the Senate.

Monarez's nomination has raised concerns among those who believe the CDC has strayed from its stated mission, particularly in the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement. Critics argue that her extensive background within the federal health bureaucracy and a heavy focus on technology-driven biosecurity suggests a continuation of the status quo rather than the long-overdue reform.



AP Images

The Announcement

[Trump announced](#) Dr. Susan Monarez as his nominee to lead the CDC, describing her as a seasoned expert in public health with a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and postdoctoral training at Stanford. The president highlighted her roles as a public servant and mother, framing her as someone who understands the stakes for American families and communities.

Trump acknowledged that Americans have lost confidence in the CDC, blaming “political bias and disastrous mismanagement.” He positioned Monarez's nomination as a corrective step — one that would bring innovation, transparency, and higher standards back to the agency. Monarez, he said, will work closely with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., now secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), to focus the CDC on disease prevention and accountability. Together, said the announcement, they are tasked with addressing the chronic disease crisis.

Background

According to her [LinkedIn profile](#), Dr. Monarez has nearly two decades of experience in senior roles across federal health and national security agencies. Since 2022, she has been deputy director at the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), overseeing its \$2 billion portfolio focused on high-risk health technology projects.

Prior to that, Monarez led the Office of Planning, Analysis, and Evaluation at HHS's Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). There, she founded the Center for Innovation and managed \$200



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billion in healthcare funding, including CARES Act relief and telehealth expansion.

From 2016 to 2018, she served as deputy assistant secretary at Department of Homeland Security (DHS), overseeing a \$70 billion budget, leading biodefense efforts, and advising the National Security Council on emerging diseases.

At the White House (2014-2016), Monarez developed strategies for pandemic response, including during the Ebola crisis.

Earlier, from 2006-2009, she shaped [Project BioShield](#) at HHS's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA). That research aimed to develop countermeasures against Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats. She also served as a science and technology policy fellow at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), focusing on biodefense drug planning.

ARPA-H

The most significant criticism of Monarez stems from her leadership role at ARPA-H. The agency itself originated as the Health Advanced Research Projects Agency (HAPRA), a health-focused spin on the military's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). The idea [was floated](#) during Trump's first term and championed by Trump's advisor and daughter Ivanka Trump.

Framed as a bold leap in biomedical innovation aimed at preventing mass shootings, HARPA's early concepts raised immediate concern. Most notably, the proposed [SAFE HOME](#) project would have used consumer devices. These devices would monitor behavioral health signals. The goal was to provide early warnings of mental illness or violent tendencies. Critics saw it not as public health innovation, but as a blueprint for domestic surveillance.

When the Biden administration, with Congressional approval, [formally launched](#) ARPA-H in December 2022, the branding changed, but only slightly. They didn't even bother with a new name, simply moving the "H" to the back. The agency was billed as a pivotal component of Biden's "Cancer Moonshot" initiative. Yet, the core model remained intact: aggressive, government-funded R&D in areas deemed too speculative or risky for traditional pharma. The agency focuses heavily on artificial intelligence (AI), bioinformatics, vaccines, wearable technologies, and real-time health data systems. Its mandate is transformation — rapid, scalable, tech-driven solutions.

Transhumanism

Monarez joined as Deputy Director in October 2022, just as the agency was ramping up. She helped shape its strategic direction, overseeing multibillion-dollar program launches rooted in computational biology and AI. To her advocates, she brought forward-looking leadership. But to critics, she signals a deeper drift into the centralized biosecurity state.

ARPA-H's portfolio under Monarez began venturing into territory critics call transhumanist. That included focus on neurotechnology, biosensors, and implantable devices. Designed to monitor health, they open doors to continuously tracking behavior, cognition, and physiology. For instance, the agency's [Proactive Health](#) initiatives aim to analyze biometric data and deliver behavioral or pharmaceutical recommendations in real time. Detractors see it as the early architecture of the "[Internet of Bodies](#)." That is a system in which health optimization becomes indistinguishable from algorithmic control.

These concerns are amplified by ARPA-H's collaboration with firms [like Palantir](#). Co-founded by Trump megadonor Peter Thiel, the company is a major intelligence and defense contractor that enables mass



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surveillance and predictive analytics.

The convergence of AI, behavioral modeling, and vast health datasets mirrors governance models [promoted](#) by the World Economic Forum (WEF). That raises fears about government-run automated health scoring, predictive profiling, and loss of autonomy.

APECx

Another hallmark of the transhumanist future advanced by ARPA-H under Monarez is its focus on next-generation vaccines. A prime example is APECx. [Launched](#) in September 2024, the \$204 million initiative uses artificial intelligence to design antigens that target entire viral families. Those include herpesviruses, flaviviruses (such as Zika and dengue), and alphaviruses (such as Chikungunya and Eastern equine encephalitis).

ARPA-H argues these viruses pose serious threats to global health, “causing” pandemics, cancers, and chronic illnesses. They contend current vaccine methods are slow, expensive, and too narrow, often focusing on single viruses while leaving broader viral families unaddressed.

Monarez has strongly supported APECx, promoting it at major events such as [BARDA Industry Day](#).

Notably, despite recent HHS layoffs, no ARPA-H programs have been canceled. The same goes for [BARDA’s \\$4.7 billion Project NextGen](#), focused on next-generation Covid vaccines. The preservation of these initiatives suggests continued commitment to vaccine-centric approach.

Is It MAHA?

Monarez’s establishment credentials all but guarantee her confirmation hearing will be a mere formality. The Senate, deeply tied to the pharmaceutical industry, will likely refrain from challenging her stances. Personal autonomy and privacy concerns in the age of advanced bio-data technologies are expected to go unexamined.

Only time will tell how — and if — her troubling vision unfolds. Yet, Monarez’s expertise suggests she would lead the CDC into a future dominated by data-driven health management. The agency, never envisioned by the Constitution, will likely elevate its focus on AI, predictive analytics, and vaccines.



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