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## Former Trump Surgeon General Warns of Consequences After RFK Jr. Halts mRNA Vaccine Research

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Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams, who served under President Donald Trump, has cautioned that lives could be lost following Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s decision to stop funding several messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine projects. Kennedy's move ends approximately \$500 million in federal research funding for 22 development programs, previously supported by the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA).

Kennedy announced last week that the funds would be redirected to what he described as “safer, broader vaccine platforms” capable of maintaining effectiveness as viruses mutate. He argued that mRNA vaccines, including those for COVID-19 and influenza, have not proven sufficiently effective against upper respiratory infections.

Speaking on CBS’s *Face the Nation* with Margaret Brennan, Adams strongly disputed Kennedy’s assessment, describing it as “simply not true.” He cited data from the COVID-19 pandemic, during which hundreds of millions received Pfizer and Moderna’s mRNA vaccines, claiming they saved more than two million lives in the United States alone. “It helped us develop COVID-19 vaccines in record time. And it’s, quite frankly, President Trump’s greatest achievement,” Adams stated.

mRNA vaccine technology played a central role in Operation Warp Speed, the public-private partnership launched during the Trump administration to accelerate COVID-19 vaccine development. Adams emphasized that relying on older vaccine methods could have delayed availability by 18 to 24 months. Former President Trump has called Operation Warp Speed “one of the most incredible things ever done in this country,” noting he has upcoming discussions on the matter.

Adams, who participated in Operation Warp Speed, expressed concern that the health secretary’s decision undermines what could be considered Trump’s Nobel Prize-worthy accomplishment. He explained that mRNA is a naturally occurring molecule in the body, acting like a “recipe card” that instructs cells on how to produce proteins. Beyond COVID-19, Adams highlighted its potential in developing treatments and vaccines for conditions such as cancer, HIV, influenza, and the Zika virus. Cutting funding, he warned, could halt advancements in one of modern medicine’s most promising areas.

The former surgeon general also criticized Kennedy’s response to a shooting incident outside the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta last Friday. Authorities are investigating whether the suspect believed they were harmed by the COVID-19 vaccine. While Kennedy issued a statement saying, “No one should face violence while working to protect the health of others,” Adams argued the response lacked urgency and failed to fully condemn the act.

Adams claimed CDC staff contacted him after the incident, expressing fear and asking him to publicly denounce the violence. “They didn’t know if this was going to continue,” Adams

said. “They were scared, and they wanted someone... to go out there and say, ‘This is wrong. Violence is wrong.’”

Adams concluded that leadership in public health is defined by decisive and clear responses to crises, warning that both the funding cuts and muted public messaging could have long-term consequences for scientific progress and public trust.