Hinson says families should take vaccine advice from doctors

Stephen Gruber-Miller

Des Moines Register **USA TODAY NETWORK**

U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson says families should rely on their doctors for advice on vaccinating their children after the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed its website to suggest a connection between vaccines and autism that scientific studies have long refuted.

The change by the CDC, the federal public health agency, has alarmed doctors and other public health professionals. Some public health experts have called it a political move by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime vaccine skeptic.

In a statement on Nov. 21, Hinson, a Republican who is running for Iowa's U.S. Senate seat, said families should consult with their doctors about vaccinations.

"Families should rely on guidance from their doctors about what's right for them and their children," Hinson said. "We're seeing a sharp increase in autism, particularly among young boys, and Iowa families deserve a deeper understanding of what's driving it across the country. I'm glad the administration is committing to this work and focusing on healthier moms and babies."

The CDC for decades has encouraged life-saving childhood vaccinations. Before the recent website change, the agency had said, "studies have shown



U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson speaks to the Faith and Freedom Coalition fall banquet on Sept. 20, at the Airport Holiday Inn in Des Moines. CODY SCANLAN/THE REGISTER

there is no link between receiving vaccines and developing autism spectrum disorder." That conclusion is widely supported by research and shared by public health professionals.

The agency's website was changed Nov. 19 to say,

"the claim 'vaccines do not cause autism' is not an evidence-based claim because studies have not ruled out the possibility that infant vaccines cause autism."

The CDC's change has received pushback from doctors and other public health organizations.

The World Health Organization previously said in a Sept. 24 statement that independent experts have confirmed for decades that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disorders.

"A robust, extensive evidence base exists showing childhood vaccines do not cause autism," the agency said in a statement at the time. "Large, high-quality studies from many countries have all reached the same conclusion. Original studies suggesting a link were flawed and have been discredited."

The Infectious Disease Society of America called the CDC change "deeply troubling," in a Nov. 20 state-

"There is no scientific rationale for CDC to change its long-standing assertion that there is no link between vaccines and autism. This change is not driven by science but by politics and will only serve to increase mistrust in science and medicine," the organization of 13,000 clinicians, scientists and public health experts said.

USA Today contributed to this report.

Stephen Gruber-Miller covers the Iowa Statehouse and politics for the Register. He can be reached by email at sgrubermil@registermedia.com or by phone at 515-284-8169. Follow him on X at @sgrubermiller.



Susan Knapp holds the U.S. flag during a military honors funeral for her husband, Bill Knapp, at Iowa Veterans Cemetery on Nov. 21 in Van Meter.

PHOTOS BY LILY SMITH/THE REGISTER

Knapp

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lowed a week of services in Des Moines to honor the self-made entrepreneur and philanthropist.

Knapp, described as a "once-in-a-generation" leader by officials from the company he founded, Knapp Properties, is credited with reshaping the Des Moines

He also was one of the few remaining World War II veterans. Knapp served in the U.S. Navy during the Battle of Okinawa, the war's last major battle in the Pacific. Enlisting with his parents' permission at 17, he transported Marines ashore on a landing craft during the Okinawa landings amid kamikaze attacks.



Mourners pay their respects at Bill Knapp's casket. The ceremony was on the grounds of the cemetery to which he donated much of the land to create.

Returning from U.S. Navy service, Knapp attended AIB College of Business in Des Moines. In 1952, he bought Iowa Realty, building it into Des Moines' largest commercial and residential real estate business.

He founded Knapp Properties in 1992 and led key developments in the revitalization of downtown Des Moines, including Capital Square, the Plaza condominium tower, the historic Hotel Savery renovation and the Elsie Mason Manor affordable senior housing

Other projects included numerous reinvestments around Drake University, Knapp Properties said.

Former Iowa Gov. Chet Culver told the Register that Knapp was not just a jack-of-all-trades, but an incredible friend and patriarch of his family.

"And he just taught us a lot about living life to its fullest and putting family and friends first in terms of your priorities. And tirelessly working hard at something that you're passionate about and then giving back," Culver said.

Susan Knapp, who was married to Bill for 27 years, said it was his kindness that drew her to him when they first met — that, and the fact that he was a Dem-

"That was the big draw," Knapp said. "Because he cared about people. He not only said he cared. He

She pointed to philanthropic projects he contributed to across central Iowa, including the Iowa State Fair, where the Knapp Varied Industries Building bears his name, the Evelyn K. Davis Tiny Tots Childcare Center and the Oakridge Neighborhood.

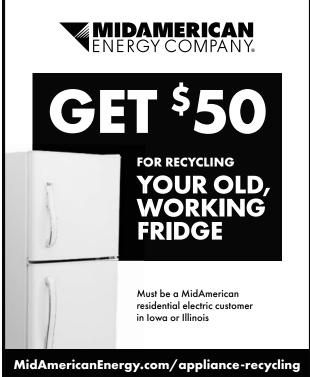
Susan Knapp said Bill's legacy is one of giving

"A lot of people have a lot of money, but don't give it back. Bill saw a need (and) he met the need," she

Des Moines Register reporter Donnelle Eller contributed to this story.

Virginia Barreda is the Des Moines city government reporter for the Register. She can be reached at vbarreda@dmreg.com.





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HOW TO CONTACT US

Our office: 400 Locust St. Ste. 500, Des Moines, IA 50309. As a safety measure during the pandemic, the office is not open to

in-person business at this time. Circulation .circulation@amestrib.com

.... Chad Giddens | cgiddens@localiq.com

Classifieds/Obituaries .. 515-465-4666 - DallasNewsObits@Gannett.com

Editor Allison Ullmann (515) 465-4666 | aullmann@theperrychief.com General News/Sports

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