

Biography of Mike Leavitt

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



Secretary Michael O. Leavitt

Michael O. Leavitt was sworn in as the 20th Secretary of Health and Human Services on January 26, 2005. As Secretary, he leads the Nation's efforts to protect the health of all Americans and provide essential human services to those in need. He manages one of the largest civilian departments in the federal government, with more than 67,000 employees and a budget that accounts for almost one out of every four federal dollars.

During his first year, he led efforts to successfully enroll tens of millions of seniors and disabled persons in the new Medicare prescription drug benefit; mobilized the nation's pandemic preparedness; accelerated the development of health information technology standards and oversaw the medical response to Hurricane Katrina. He presided over changes in Medicaid statutes to give states flexibility to provide targeted insurance coverage to more people, and worked with Congress to pass the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

During his second year, Leavitt spearheaded the Nation's Health Diplomacy initiative aimed at improving the health of Central Americans and bringing the countries of North and Central America closer together. He also organized a nationwide campaign to transform the Nation's health care sector into a value-driven health care system. He is intensely focused on making health care more transparent in quality and price, and reducing the time and expense of bringing safe and effective drugs to market.

Prior to his current service, Leavitt was head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and served three terms as Governor of Utah. During his eleven years as Governor, Utah was recognized six times as one of America's best managed states. He was chosen by his peers as Chairman of the National Governors Association, Western Governors Association and Republican Governors.

Prior to his public service, Secretary Leavitt served as president and chief executive officer of a regional insurance firm, establishing it as one of the top insurance brokers in America. He is married to Jacalyn S. Leavitt; they are the parents of five children.