

Harris team releases health summary

Doctor: Vice president is in 'excellent health'

**DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris is in "excellent health" and "possesses the physical and mental resiliency" required to serve as president, her doctor said in a letter released Saturday that summarizes her medical history and status.

Dr. Joshua Simmons, an Army colonel and physician to the Democratic nominee, wrote that Harris, 59, maintains a healthy, active lifestyle and her most recent physical last April was "unremarkable."

She "possesses the physical and mental resiliency required to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency, to include those as Chief Executive, Head of State and Commander in Chief," he wrote in a two-page letter.

Harris' campaign hopes the release of her medical report will draw a contrast with Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, who shared only limited information about his health over the years, and raise questions about his fitness to serve, according to a campaign aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Trump released very little health information, including after his ear was grazed by a bullet during a July

13 assassination attempt in Pennsylvania.

Steven Cheung, a spokesman for the Trump campaign, said Saturday that Trump voluntarily released updates from his personal physician as well as detailed reports from Rep. Ronny Jackson, R-Texas, who was Trump's physician at the White House. Jackson treated Trump after the assassination attempt.

"All have concluded he is in perfect and excellent health to be Commander in Chief," Cheung said in a statement.

The campaign press office provided links to some of Trump's past medical reports. They included <https://tinyurl.com/yckc495b> and <https://tinyurl.com/4z27pk2f>.

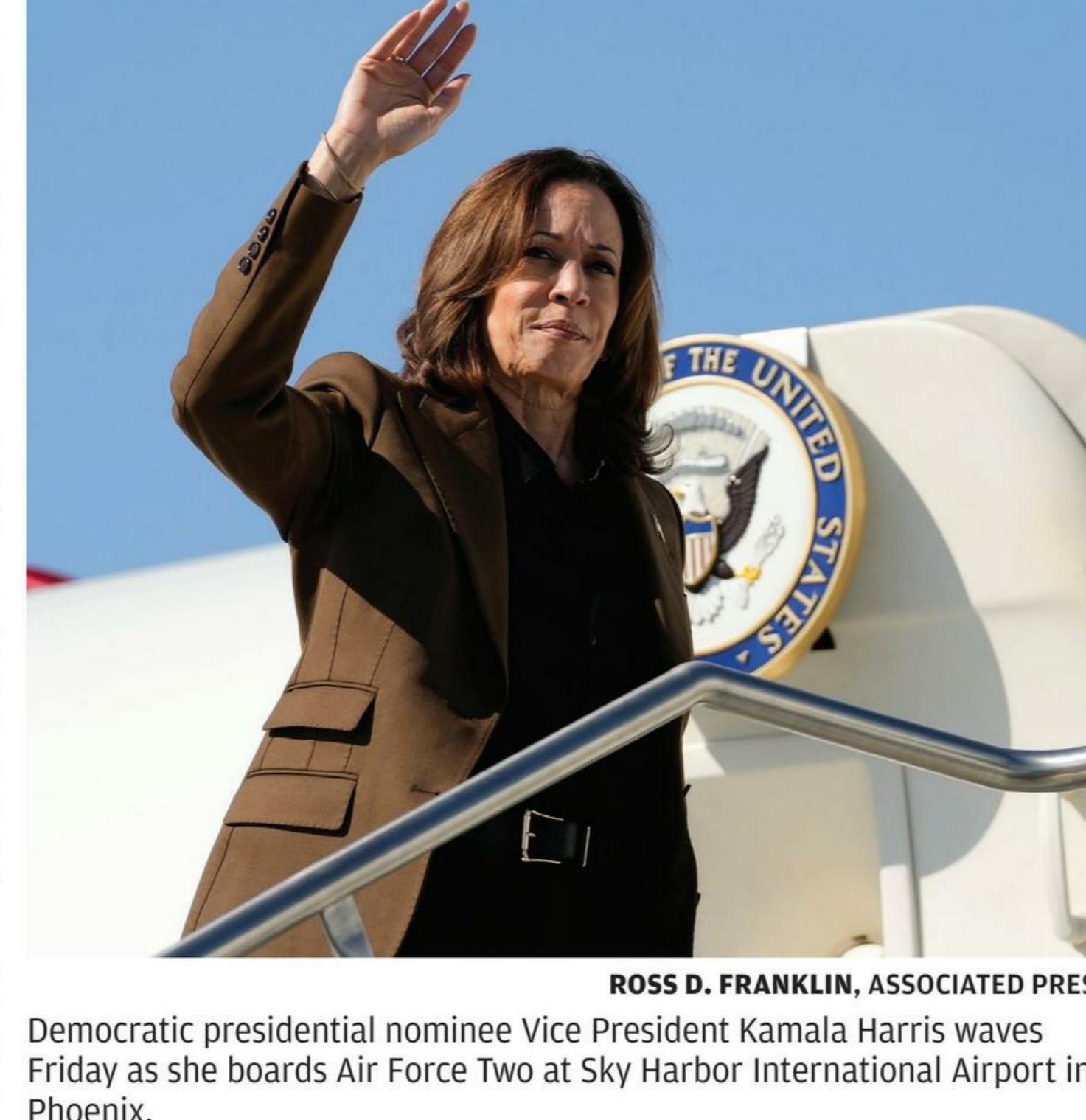
If Trump, who is 78, were to be elected next month, he would be the oldest president in U.S. history by the time his term ends in 2029.

Simmons, who said he has been Harris' primary care physician for the past 3½ years, said the vice president has a history of seasonal allergies and urticaria, or hives.

She was able to "dramatically" improve her symptoms over the past three years with an immunotherapy medication that helps the body become less sensitive to allergens.

Simmons said Harris' latest blood work and other test results were "unremarkable." Her blood pressure is not worryingly high and she is at low risk for heart disease.

According to the summary of an



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Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris waves Friday as she boards Air Force Two at Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix.

exam conducted six months ago, Harris' vital signs showed a blood pressure of 128 over 74, a heart rate of 78 beats per minute, pulse oximetry of 100% on room air with a respiratory rate of 16 breaths per minute and a temperature of 98.7 degrees. Pulse oximetry measures the amount of oxygen in a person's blood.

Simmons reported that Harris' head, eyes, ears, nose and pharynx are normal.

Also in the report: Harris wears contact lenses for mild nearsightedness; her family history includes maternal colon cancer; she is up to date on preventive care recommendations, including having a colonoscopy and annual mam-

mograms, as well as routine immunizations.

Harris' mother, Shyamala Go-palan, was 70 when she died of colon cancer in February 2009.

The vice president "maintains a healthy, active lifestyle, despite her busy schedule," including "vigorous daily aerobic exercise and core strength training," Simmons reported. She eats a healthy diet, does not use tobacco products and drinks alcohol "only occasionally and in moderation," he wrote.

As Harris' office released the medical report, her campaign highlighted recent media reports raising questions about Trump's health and mental acuity and his failure to provide information about the state of his health and medical history.

Trump eagerly questioned President Joe Biden's health when the 81-year-old president sought re-election. Since Biden dropped out and was replaced by Harris on the Democratic ticket, Trump's own health drew more attention.

Last November, Trump marked Biden's birthday by releasing a letter from his physician that reported the former president was in "excellent" physical and mental health.

The letter posted on Trump's social media platform contained no details to support its claims — no measures like weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, nor results of any test.

Helene

From A1

wait to apply. Get started today at DisasterAssistance.gov, use the FEMA App, or call 800-621-3362 any day of the week.

FEMA's disaster assistance offers new benefits for survivors that provide flexible funding, a simplified process and expanded eligibility for access to a wider range of assistance and funds for serious needs. Some available resources include:

■ Money to help pay for essential items such as food, water, baby formula, breastfeeding supplies, medication and other emergency supplies.

■ Money to help with imme-

diate housing needs if you cannot return to your home because of the disaster. The money can be used to stay in a hotel, with family and friends, or other accommodations.

■ Survivors now have the option to apply for a low-interest SBA loan at the same time they apply for FEMA assistance.

■ If you received an insurance payout that did not cover the cost of damage to your home or property, you may still be eligible to receive money from FEMA.

■ Keep in mind, FEMA assistance is not a replacement for home, renters or flood insurance and will not cover all losses from a disaster.

■ You may receive money to repair the portions of your home damaged by the disaster regardless

of pre-existing conditions. You can also make repairs that prevent similar damage from future disasters.

Burke County residents should note that FEMA's response to Hurricane Helene has been hampered by misinformation on social media and phishing websites that appear similar to the application website. For verified information and resources related to Hurricane Helene, visit burkenc.org/Helene.

Debris

Clearing debris is a huge part of recovery efforts in Burke County. Debris pickup services will begin Monday and continue over the coming weeks and months at no cost to residents. To avoid disposal charges, residents should

not transport storm debris to the landfill. Anyone transporting debris to the landfill is reminded to secure the load to prevent littering. Separate debris and place it on the side of the road for pickup.

Additional information about debris removal is available by calling 828-764-3088.

Donations

Individuals interested in contributing to the recovery effort are encouraged to donate to the Burke County Disaster Relief Fund. This fund was established by the Community Foundation of Burke County for nonprofits Burke County and those serving the county to apply for funding to help community efforts in assisting neighbors. Nonprofits

involved in disaster relief activities can apply for up to \$10,000 in funding.

Wells

Burke County has resources available for residents using well water that may have been impacted by Hurricane Helene. Comprehensive guides on managing wells before, during and after flooding are available to ensure the safety of your drinking water. All wells must be disinfected before they can be tested.

For more information or to request a well test, visit burkenc.org/Helene or call 828-764-9240.

For the latest information and resources related to the Hurricane Helene recovery effort, visit burkenc.org/Helene.

Election

From A1

It's a threat taken seriously by intelligence analysts, elected officials and tech executives, who say that while there's already been a steady buildup of disinformation and influence operations, the worst may be yet to come.

"It's not like at the end of election night, particularly assuming how close this election will be, that this will be over," said Sen. Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee. "One of my greatest concerns is the level of misinformation, disinformation that may come from our adversaries after the polls close could actually be as significant as anything that happens up to the closing of the polls."

Analysts are blunter, warning that a particularly effective piece of disinformation could be devas-

tating to public confidence in the election if spread in the hours after the polls close and if the group behind the campaign knows to target a particularly important swing state or voting bloc.

Possible scenarios include out-of-context footage of election workers repurposed to show supposed fraud, a deepfake video of a presidential candidate admitting to cheating or a robocall directed at non-English speakers warning them not to vote.

When a false or misleading claim circulates weeks before the election, there's time for local election officials, law enforcement or news organizations to gather the facts, correct any falsehoods and get the word out.

But if someone spreads a deceptive video or photo designed to make a big chunk of the electorate distrust the results the day after the election, it can be hard or even impossible for the truth to catch up.

It happened four years ago, when a drumbeat of lies about the 2020 results spurred the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Often, those arrested on accusations of trying to interfere with the transfer of power have cited debunked election-fraud narratives that circulated shortly after Election Day.

An especially close election decided in a handful of swing states could heighten that risk even further, making it more likely that a rumor about suitcases of illegal ballots in Georgia, to cite an example from 2020, could have a big impact on perceptions.

President Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump in 2020 wasn't especially close, and no irregularities big enough to affect the result were found — yet false claims about vote-rigging were still widely believed by many supporters of the Republican, who's running for president again.

The relatively long run-up to

Inauguration Day on Jan. 20 gives those looking to sow doubt about the results ample time to do so, whether they are propaganda agencies in Moscow or extremist groups in the U.S. such as the Proud Boys.

Ryan LaSalle, CEO of the cybersecurity firm Nisos, said he won't feel relief until a new president is sworn in without any serious problems.

"The time to stay most focused is right now through the peaceful transfer of power," LaSalle said. "That's when real-life activities could happen, and that's when they would have the greatest chance of having an impact on that peaceful transfer."

Another risk, according to officials and tech companies, is that Russia or another adversary would try to hack into a local or state election system — not necessarily to change votes but as a way of making voters question the security of the system.

"The most perilous time I think will come 48 hours before the election," Microsoft President Brad Smith told lawmakers on the Senate Intelligence Committee last month. The hearing focused on American tech companies' efforts to safeguard the election from foreign disinformation and cyberattacks.

Despite the challenges, election security officials are quick to reassure Americans that the U.S. election system is impervious to any attack that could alter the outcome of the vote.

While influence operations may seek to spread distrust about the results, improvements to the system make it stronger than ever when it comes to efforts to change votes.

"Malicious actors, even if they tried, could not have an impact at scale such that there would be a material effect on the outcome of the election," Jen Easterly, director of the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

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IDENTIFICATION

The News Herald (ISSN 0750-3980), a Lee

Enterprises Newspaper, is published Tuesdays,

Thursdays and Saturdays at 3078 U.S. HIGHWAY

70 E., MORGANTON, NC 28655. Periodicals Postage Paid at Morganton, NC, POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PO BOX 2795, MECHANICS-

VILLE, VA 2316.

PRICING

The Morganton News Herald is a Lee Enter-

prises Newspaper and is published online daily,

and three days per week in print (Tuesdays,

Thursdays and Saturdays).

The subscription price includes all applicable

sales tax, and a Print + Digital subscription

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