

Docket: CDC-2025-0024

Public Comment for the June 25-27, 2025, CDC ACIP Committee Meeting

To RFK Jr. and Members of the CDC ACIP committee:

I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Today, I am writing to express grave concerns about the recent termination of all 17 members of the CDC ACIP committee announced on June 9 by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and to ask in the strongest terms that all vaccine policy decisions be made using open and transparent processes. As someone who is 60 years old, and who, thanks to vaccines, had only a very mild case of COVID a few years ago, I have experienced the value of vaccines. As a history teacher, I have taught students about how vaccines basically eradicated smallpox, and that the knowledge of the value of inoculation can be traced back to pre-colonial Africa. Surely this country values its leading role in medical science.

The ACIP committee members have an important role as independent expert scientists or clinicians on the ACIP committee. Crucially, they provide their understanding of the safety and efficacy of FDA-approved and authorized vaccines, while also guiding insurance coverage and coverage for uninsured children through the Vaccines for Children program. Currently, vaccination rates for many infectious diseases are very low, and many communities across the US are directly affected by outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, pertussis, and COVID. Many of these infections can cause serious and potentially lifelong health consequences. Children in 2025 should not die or become disabled from infectious diseases because of a lack of access to affordable and effective vaccines.

RFK Jr., Marty Makary, and Vinay Prasad have recently established policies that limit access to COVID vaccinations. Creating such barriers is harmful to the public's health. Everyone must have regular access to COVID vaccines that are updated, widely available, and fully covered by health insurance. The scientific evidence is irrefutable and it is a waste of precious resources and time to conduct additional efficacy studies, which only serve to sow doubt in vaccines. Receiving a COVID vaccine within the last year reduces the risk of symptoms, severe disease, disability, and death for people of all ages, including previously healthy people. The new policies create barriers to access to COVID vaccines, limiting access for children, pregnant people, and adults under age 65. These restrictions also create immense confusion among the public on the usefulness of COVID vaccines. We ask you to take action, follow the evidence, and reinstate universal COVID vaccine recommendations for people of all ages, twice a year, for all COVID vaccine formulations.

Any changes to vaccine-related policies requires a science and evidence-based approach entailing an open, and transparent process. Similarly at the FDA, the VRBPAC committee members were faced with undue influence by the leadership of the FDA including Vinay Prasad. He made a decision for the VRBPAC committee before they had a chance to consider and share vaccine recommendations. This also happened with the Influenza vaccine strain selection, which occurred in a closed-door meeting without recommendations from the FDA VRBPAC committee members, and no opportunity for public consideration or comment.

I urge this committee to ensure that all vaccine policy decisions are considered, evaluated, and concluded using open and transparent processes, all of which are hallmarks of democracy.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Valerie Wald*

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