

I am submitting this comment for Docket No. CDC-2025-0024. I am writing to urge the CDC to support access to all FDA-approved vaccines for all Americans. I specifically urge the CDC to reinstate the experts on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and that any new members of ACIP go through the normal vetting process including disclosing financial and other conflicts of interest.

I am a regular citizen belonging to no groups on this topic, and I have no financial conflicts of interest. I do have expertise many members of the public do not have: I have an extensive background in biology including a Ph.D. in biological psychology/neuroscience. This gives me a greater facility to understand medicine than the average layperson.

I also understand the history of vaccines, which have been the greatest public health accomplishment of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and possibly of all time. The number of lives that have been saved by vaccines is tremendous. My own grandparents grew up in a time when childhood fatalities from diseases like measles were common. My grandfather suffered from polio, and he had a sister who died at 15 from pneumonia. The scale of childhood death and lifelong disability we used to have from diseases like these is so, so reduced, all thanks to vaccines. Newer vaccines also are saving lives. The HPV vaccine is already having a groundbreaking effect to reduce cervical and other cancers.

There are many problems with modern medicine. There are drugs that are over-prescribed, and drugs with side effects and dangers that are glossed over, while in other situations drugs are gatekept and under-prescribed to people who genuinely need them, especially people from marginalized groups. There is much we can do to improve.

But, vaccines are not part of the problem. Vaccines are the one area of medicine that gives us tremendous “bang for our buck”. The benefits they confer are so great and the risks and costs of them are so small compared to other drugs and medical procedures. The benefits go beyond individual protection, to protecting entire populations from disease. Not everyone can have vaccines, due to health conditions. But, by vaccinating most of the population, we can protect everybody, whether they are vaccinated or not.

We rely on the ACIP to recommend the vaccines we already know are safe and effective from decades of clinical trials and millions of people who have gotten them. Without ACIP recommendation, insurers will no longer cover this essential medicine.

Once again, I urge the CDC to:

- 1) Reinstate the experts that formerly made up the ACIP,
- 2) To vet any new ACIP member properly including requiring disclosure of conflicts of interest, and

- 3) I urge the ACIP, whatever its makeup, to continue to recommend the vaccines it has already deemed safe. Vaccines should be recommended for all ages.
- 4) Also, I urge ACIP to continue to recommend COVID-19 vaccines for all ages, including children and those who are pregnant. ACIP should recommend that everyone gets a COVID vaccine booster twice a year.

This is because research shows that COVID-19 vaccines have waning efficacy after 6 months. In fact, the half-life of vaccine efficacy against Omicron strains was recently shown to be only 87 days.

ACIP can help combat the awful effects of repeated waves of COVID on society, including all the lost work time from sick days, and long-term lost productivity and suffering due to long COVID. Millions suffer from long COVID; I personally have a colleague and my mother suddenly develop dangerously high blood pressure right after a COVID infection, likely due to the known damage COVID wreaks on the cardiovascular system.

ACIP can help prevent these effects by recommending a COVID vaccine booster twice a year. ACIP should also work for universal coverage of COVID vaccines, even for those who lack health insurance. And the CDC and ACIP should incentivize pharmaceutical companies to continue to produce vaccine updates at least once a year, and to continue to develop alternate vaccine methods, such as pills or nasal sprays.

Please consider the comments of the thousands of people like me who just want to stay well and have a future for our kids without rampant measles and other deadly diseases. Please listen to scientists. Please bring experts back to ACIP. Please listen to the public.