

June 30, 2025

As an educator, teacher, and teacher of teachers for almost 40 years, the essential need for vaccination seems to me obvious: vaccinations produce a healthier population, save lives, reduce school absences, and reduce illnesses that interfere with children's opportunities to learn. COVID-19 is associated with lasting cognitive impairment (among other debilitating consequences) and vaccination can prevent this. The normalization of the idea that vaccinations are unnecessary, or worse harmful, has led to a drop-off in the number of children receiving them in recent years, with dramatic negative consequences. Changes in CDC policy to make vaccines less accessible and more expensive will exacerbate this trend. Children in 2025 should not become disabled – or die! -- from infectious diseases because of a lack of access to affordable and effective vaccines.

The termination of all 17 members of the CDC ACIP committee announced on June 9 by Mr. Kennedy undermines the committee's independent decision process and compromises its legitimacy: it is both bad science and bad health policy. I join with others in demanding transparency in relation to potential financial and other conflicts of interest for members of ACIP. I also urge you to take the following steps:

1. Formally recognize that currently available FDA-approved vaccines are safe and effective. We all rely on CDC ACIP vaccine recommendations for access to vaccines and insurance coverage. Undermining these recommendations for ideological reasons is unacceptable.
2. ACIP must continue to recommend widespread and unhindered access to a wide range of vaccines to protect people of all ages in the US.
3. ACIP must preserve a universal recommendation for COVID vaccines for people of all ages, including children and pregnant people, at least twice annually.

Let me make clear that I have no financial conflicts of interest on this topic. Instead I have friends and students who depend on vaccines to stay alive, to learn, to flourish. Any changes to vaccine-related policies requires an open, science and evidence-based approach. I ask this committee to ensure that all vaccine policy decisions are considered, evaluated, and concluded using open and transparent processes, all of which are hallmarks both of democracy and of good science.

Thank you for your consideration.