

I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

As an American fortunate to have been born and grown up during the “golden age of medicine” I have the deepest gratitude for having escaped life changing infectious diseases thanks to the scientific discoveries and attendant advancements of widely available antibiotics (penicillin) and vaccines that protected me and my friends from a lifetime in wheelchairs (polio vaccine) and other scourges that killed and debilitated millions in the decades that preceded these medical advancements.

Today, I am writing to express grave concerns about the recent termination of all 17 members of the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) announced on June 9 by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. These former members have an important role as independent expert scientists or clinicians on the ACIP committee with a crucial role in providing 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 consequences on their health. 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 and frankly approaches wonton disregard for human life and the well being of others. Everyone must have regular access to updated COVID vaccines and widely available with full coverage 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 beseech 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.