

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.

The words I am about to say are rooted in science, logic, and a deep understanding of infectious disease and the healthcare system, as someone who is a cancer survivor and currently disabled. I fear for children, healthy people, and other vulnerable groups like myself, who may lose vaccine access under this current administration. It has been proven that vaccines prevent severe illness, and we all deserve to be able to access that tool of healthcare, whether we want to or not. Refusing to get vaccinated is a choice - not a mandate. And we should all be able to make that choice freely. If vaccine access is taken away, it will no longer be a choice. Lack of access is just as heavy-handed as mandating vaccines. The removal of choice is something I ask the Committee to consider carefully. Revoking this access puts cancer-survivors like me, my healthy family, my coworkers who have children, and many others at risk of death or lifelong health complications, as unvaccinated individuals have shown to have more severe outcomes after contracting COVID-19. Regardless of if the committee thinks COVID is still a threat to people (even though there is currently a strain called NB.1.8.1 giving everyone I know "razor blade throat"), I urge the committee to keep COVID vaccines universally accessible, so that we may all have the ability to make this choice about our own bodies.

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. 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. COVID vaccines must be available to everyone and not be limited to only some people.

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 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.