

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.

I have never been happier than when I walked into the temporary clinic in South Dakota to get my first COVID-19 vaccine. I said to the nurse, "I bet you haven't seen this many happy people in a long time!" This vaccine was created through the shared effort of trusted scientists. We know it's safe. We know it works. We know it has saved lives and improved quality of life for most vaccinated people. Americans must not lose access to this life-saving medicine just because RFK Jr. has financial investments in anti-vaccine interests. If people don't want to get the vaccine, they don't have to. But most of us desperately want to protect ourselves from this life-threatening disease. We trust the science! We don't trust RFK Jr. As a scholar of the history of public health, I can tell you that history will remember this moment and either praise or criticize it. Make it a moment to be praised.

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.

RFK Jr. must preserve an independent decision process with CDC's ACIP and reverse the decision to remove the recent expert advisors and bypass his policies limiting access to COVID vaccines.

Members of ACIP must disclose all financial and other conflicts of interest.

ACIP must understand that currently available FDA-approved vaccines are safe and effective, and children, adults, and pregnant people all of whom rely on CDC ACIP vaccine recommendations for access to vaccines and insurance coverage.

ACIP must continue to recommend widespread and unhindered access to a wide range of vaccines to protect people of all ages in the US.

ACIP must preserve a universal recommendation for COVID vaccines for people of all ages, including children and pregnant people, at least twice annually.