

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:

With a master's degree in public health and retired from a 3-decade career in public health, I write to you today 1) to urge the ACIP to keep COVID vaccines available and covered by insurance at least twice a year, for everyone, including people of all ages, children and pregnant people, and 2) to express grave concerns about the recent termination of the 17 members of the ACIP committee.

Current vaccination rates for many infectious diseases are low, and many communities across the US experience outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, pertussis and COVID-19. Many of these infections can cause serious and potentially lifelong negative health consequences. In this day and age, no one should die or become disabled from an infectious disease because of lack of access to affordable and effective vaccines.

However, RFK Jr., Marty Makary, and Vinay Prasad have recently established policies that limit access to COVID vaccinations. These policies are harmful to public health, and they set a dangerous precedent for future policy-making related to other vaccines. Especially egregious are recent COVID vaccine-related policies that create barriers to access for children, pregnant people and adults under 65. Everyone should have regular access to updated COVID vaccines, fully covered by health insurance. Scientific evidence has repeatedly shown that COVID vaccines are effective and safe and that receiving a COVID vaccine within the previous year reduces the risk of severe disease, disability, and death for people of all ages, including previously healthy people. But the new restrictions waste time and money on unnecessary efficacy studies, block access and create confusion among the public about the usefulness of COVID vaccines. I urge 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.

As mentioned above, I also write to you with grave concerns about RFK Jr.'s recent termination of all the members of the CDC ACIP committee. These now-former members had been carefully vetted. They served as independent expert scientists or clinicians on the ACIP committee and were tasked with the important work of providing their understanding of the safety and efficacy of FDA-approved and authorized vaccines while guiding insurance coverage and coverage for uninsured children. I urge RFK to reverse their termination and to reinstate the 17 members of ACIP. I also urge him to employ ACIP's long policy of requiring all committee members to disclose financial and other conflicts of interest.

Currently available FDA-approved vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective, so it is imperative that ACIP continue to recommend widespread, unhindered access to FDA-approved vaccines to protect people of all ages. Any changes of vaccine-related policies necessitate a science- and evidence-based approach with an open, transparent process that, from the start and throughout the entire process, integrally involves, respects and follows the recommendations of an ACIP committee that is comprised of independent expert scientists or clinicians in fields including public health, immunology, virology and vaccinology. Independent decisions by agency heads and closed-door meetings without public input are antithetical to democracy. I urge RFK and new ACIP members to ensure that all vaccine policy decisions are considered, evaluated, and concluded in open and transparent processes with priority given to evidence-based information.

Thank you for your consideration.