

Docket: CDC-2025-0024

Public Comment for the June 25-27, 2025, CDC ACIP Committee Meeting, regarding availability of vaccines to all.

To Robert Francis Kennedy, Jr. and Members of the CDC ACIP committee:

CC: Senators Alexandro Padilla, Adam Schiff, and Congressman Jimmy Panetta

I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

I write to express my grave concerns about the termination of all members of the CDC ACIP committee, announced on June 9 by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. These members played an important role as independent and 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. This impacts ALL of us in this country, through their guidance of insurance coverage, and coverage for uninsured children through the Vaccines for Children program.

Currently, communities across the US are affected by outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles. 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.

In my lifetime I have benefited from the development and availability of vaccines for diseases that have the potential for life threatening outcomes. I grew up during the recurring fear of polio, prior to the vaccines. In my age cohort (early baby boomers) are those who are now suffering from post-polio syndrome, because they had the disease before the vaccine was available. Some have been severely disabled, and rendered unable to work, by this recurrence of the disease that they had survived. Do you wish that this will happen again?

Most of the baby boomers had measles, "german" measles, mumps, and chicken pox before vaccines were developed. One friend became in her twenties the guardian for her sister who had suffered severe, debilitating, brain damage from measles. Do you wish that this will happen again?

I have a granddaughter with a congenital heart condition, which could result in severe heart impacts from illnesses such as measles, chicken pox, influenza, and from emergent diseases such as COVID. Are you willing to risk the lives of such vulnerable children and youth?

You, with Marty Makary, and Vinay Prasad, have recently established policies that limit access to COVID vaccinations.. This harms the health of the public—those for whom you are appointed to protect. Everyone, for the reasons I cited earlier for other diseases, must have regular access to updated COVID vaccines available with full coverage by health insurance, including benefits through VA.. The scientific evidence is irrefutable and it is a waste of resources and time to conduct additional efficacy studies. I ask you to follow the established scientific evidence, and reinstate universal COVID vaccine recommendations for people of all ages, twice a year, for all COVID vaccine formulations.

As you are re-examining the availability of vaccines for recurrent viruses, such as influenza and COVID, are you willing to risk the lives of those who because of the protection of vaccines are living productive lives with conditions such as COPD, cerebral palsy, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus, the many cancers, and other auto-immune disorders?

I have a grand-nephew with Down Syndrome. Diseases that are now prevented by vaccines could have a devastating impact on him. Do you also wish that his parents, who are his primary caretakers, suffer from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines? Who will care for my grand-nephew when his parents are incapacitated by a preventable virus?

What of the other caregivers of those at-risk, who may be younger or otherwise outside of the groups for whom the vaccines are approved? The family caregivers. The medical personnel? The caregivers in homes and facilities? The first responders?

Changes to any vaccine-related policies require a science and evidence-based approach. I ask this committee to ensure that all vaccine policy decisions are considered, evaluated, and concluded using open, scientifically based, and transparent processes, all of which are hallmarks of democracy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anne Wheelis