



June 20, 2025

Re: **Docket No. CDC-2025-0025**

Members of the ACIP Committee:

In your new role as members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Families Fighting Flu wanted to take this opportunity to introduce you to our organization and ensure that you are familiar with the work we do, and the very personal reasons behind that work.

Families Fighting Flu is an organization made up of families across the U.S. who have experienced hospitalization or death of loved ones due to influenza. Our organization was founded more than 20 years ago, by a small group of parents who had each lost a young child to the flu.

When we realized that there was a vaccine available that could have prevented our kids from getting sick, but that it was not recommended for younger children at that time, we acted. Beginning in October 2004, we met with ACIP and shared our stories. We urged ACIP to expand the flu vaccine recommendation and we are proud that we played a role in establishing the current recommendation—that everyone aged 6 months and older get an annual flu vaccine.

Upholding the influenza vaccine recommendation is a key part of our organization's mission—to help prevent other families from unnecessarily experiencing the devastation the flu can cause. In this process, we not only honor our loved ones, but we also understand and appreciate how vaccine policy, and specifically how ACIP works. We look forward to continuing to be a resource about the seriousness of the flu and the importance of the annual flu vaccine.

The flu vaccine has been around for more than 80 years and is credited with saving millions of lives each year. However, we continue to see a decline in flu vaccine rates, and at the same time have just gone through another respiratory season with far too much disease

and death. Estimates so far for the 2024-2025 flu season point to more than 610,000 hospitalizations, 27,000 deaths—including more than 245 pediatric flu deaths.

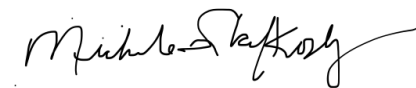
As you know, ACIP's recommendations are critical to ensuring access and insurance coverage for all vaccines for all Americans—whether covered by private or public insurance especially children on Medicaid whose vaccines are covered under the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Without insurance coverage many more Americans could go unvaccinated which is particularly worrying following the devastating numbers of this past flu season, and what is happening right now in the Southern Hemisphere—where flu cases are surging early. The number of cases in the Southern Hemisphere is a reliable predictor for what will happen in the U.S. next fall and winter.

We can and must do better. Vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of flu, reduce the risk of hospitalization, and reduce the time lost from work, time lost from school, and lessen symptoms for those who do contract the disease.

Our family members are available to meet with each of you to share their stories and to educate the committee on the critical importance of Americans being protected from the flu. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to working with you to continue the long-standing tradition of strong flu vaccine recommendations for every American aged 6 months and older.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michele Slafkosky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michele" and last name "Slafkosky" clearly distinguishable.

Michele Slafkosky

Executive Director

Families Fighting Flu

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