

July 2, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re. Secretary Kennedy's Decision to Remove ACIP Members Undermines Scientific Integrity and Threatens the Health of Vulnerable Populations

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

On behalf of the Health Equity Collaborative and the undersigned organizations, we write to express grave concern about Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s abrupt dismissal of all 17 members of the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

These actions not only unnecessarily weaken the federal government's vaccine program but will impact access to lifesaving vaccines and put individuals and families across our country at risk, especially more vulnerable populations.

The Facts

On June 9, 2025, Secretary Kennedy removed all 17 ACIP members, claiming the committee is "[plagued by persistent conflicts of interest](#)" and that it has become "[little more than a rubber stamp for any vaccine](#)." Less than 24 hours after Kennedy announced the removals, he appointed [eight new members](#). Several of these new appointees have a history of [promoting vaccine misinformation](#) or publicly questioning the value of routine childhood vaccinations.

This announcement comes on the heels of another questionable decision by Kennedy's U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to [remove COVID-19 vaccines from recommendations for children and pregnant individuals](#), despite overwhelming consensus on their safety and efficacy.

In response to Kennedy's removal of all 17 members of ACIP, the American Medical Association (AMA) passed an [emergency resolution](#) asking that Congress investigate the actions of the Secretary and announced its intention to evaluate and invest in alternative evidence-based vaccine advisory structures as necessary.

Dozens of leading healthcare professionals and organizations have also [condemned this decision](#), including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American College Health Association (ACHA), National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID), and National Medical Association (NMA).

The Risks

Rather than restoring trust in our fractured public health system, as Secretary Kennedy claims, these changes are sowing confusion and raising alarms across the political spectrum.

ACIP has made [significant strides in recent years](#), particularly in areas related to transparency, evidence evaluation, and adapting to public health emergencies. Now, many doctors and health experts are publicly recognizing that these actions by Secretary Kennedy will endanger the health of millions whose illnesses could have been addressed if the Trump Administration had stayed the course.

This move has immediate implications for millions of Americans, particularly children, people with disabilities and underserved communities, who already face systemic health disparities and deeply rooted medical mistrust. ACIP has long served as a cornerstone of our nation's health policy, ensuring that vaccines are safe, effective, and accessible to all populations. Their work was grounded in science, not speculation, and certainly not politics. Secretary Kennedy's actions will directly harm:

- Children and pregnant women, whose access to free vaccines under programs like Vaccines for Children and Medicaid may be curtailed if the ACIP no longer recommends those vaccines. Secretary Kennedy [has already gone back on his promise not to change the nation's vaccination schedule](#).
- Underserved populations, where vaccine hesitancy has been [shaped by historical neglect and medical abuse](#). The removal of trusted scientific voices only deepens this mistrust.
- Caregivers and individuals with disabilities, who rely on ACIP-endorsed vaccines to protect against preventable diseases. A disruption in expert oversight might lead to gaps in protection and a rise in illnesses, potentially impacting the health and well-being of the disability community.

Public health officials are also concerned that [school vaccine mandates and insurance coverage decisions, both of which rely on ACIP guidance, will be undermined](#). The newly constituted committee, which is notably skeptical of vaccines, could vote to downgrade the importance of some shots, and ultimately make it more difficult for families to get them.

The ripple effects are profound.

Congress Must Act

For underserved populations, vaccines are an exceptionally effective and economical means of addressing health challenges. By dismantling ACIP and injecting ideology into vaccine recommendations, Secretary Kennedy has jeopardized decades of progress in public health. The most vulnerable will bear the brunt of the consequences.

We urge you to take immediate action to investigate Secretary Kennedy's deeply concerning decisions and support legislative efforts that uphold the scientific integrity of our public health institutions, such as [The Family Vaccine Protection Act](#) introduced by Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Congresswoman Kim Schrier, M.D. (D-WA). The bill aims to ensure vaccines remain accessible and affordable, especially for children, by codifying current practices of science-based vaccine recommendations and protecting the independence of ACIP.

Protecting the independence of bodies like ACIP is paramount to ensuring that all Americans, especially our most vulnerable populations, continue to benefit from safe, effective, and accessible vaccines. Our collective health depends on it.

Sincerely,

Health Equity Collaborative

ALLvanza

Alliance for Aging Research

ASPIRA Association, Inc.

Association of University Centers On Disabilities

Choose Healthy Life

Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer

HealthHIV

Latino Commission on AIDS

MANA, A National Latina Organization

National Consumers League

National Disability Rights Network

Partnership for Innovation and
Empowerment

South Asian Public Health Association

Southern Christian Leadership Global Policy
Initiative

The Balm in Gilead, Inc

The Hispanic Institute



HEALTH EQUITY COLLABORATIVE



AUCD

Association of University Centers On Disabilities



Allvanza

ASPIRA



CHOOSE
HEALTHY LIFE



Health
HIV