

## **Voices for Vaccines' Statement on the Termination of ACIP Memberships**

You may have seen the news that HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Junior has dismissed the members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). This matters for families because this group decides which vaccines doctors recommend for children and adults. Here's what you need to know about it.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, or ACIP, is a team of independent vaccine experts who meet at the CDC. They are physicians and nurses who care for families and experts who study infectious diseases. Once a new vaccine is licensed by the FDA, ACIP reviews all the data and provides guidance on how a vaccine should be used. Their advice is what ultimately lands a vaccine on the schedule your provider uses to make sure you are up-to-date and protected.

Professional medical societies are woven into the schedule-making process. Groups such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) send non-voting liaison representatives to ACIP meetings so frontline pediatric and family-practice perspectives are heard. After ACIP votes, these organizations review the decision and, if they agree, formally endorse it in their own policy statements and encourage their tens of thousands of members to follow suit.

The final schedule is approved by the AAP and the AAFP adding a second layer of expert oversight before it reaches your family's chart. It is not unprecedented for the AAP or AAFP's recommendations to differ from the ACIP, even though they are usually identical. AAP and AAFP are committed to making sure our families are protected when they need protection against the diseases that threaten us.

ACIP's voting members are mostly pediatricians, epidemiologists, and infectious-disease doctors. One seat is set aside for a consumer advocate. They apply through an open process run by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), file annual financial disclosures, and must recuse themselves from any vote where they have a conflict of interest. Dozens of non-voting liaisons from medical societies and federal agencies also sit in, which keeps the conversation broad and transparent.

HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. dismissed all 17 current ACIP members on June 9 and said he will pick replacements. Many worry that swapping out the entire panel at once could delay future vaccine guidance and erode the trust ACIP has built over decades.

### **What does this mean for you right now?**

- The current U.S. vaccine schedule has not changed. Your child's well-visit shots and your own boosters are still recommended and still available.
- Day-care and school requirements, which are set at the state level, remain the same.
- ACIP's next public meeting may be postponed until new members are seated, so upcoming votes (for example, on this fall's updated flu and COVID formulations) could be delayed.

**What happens next?**

HHS must nominate and vet new experts, publish their names, and convene the next meeting. These steps are normally open to the public. ACIP meetings are free to watch, and families are welcome to give public comment. We do not know whether the next ACIP meeting set for June 25-27 will be rescheduled.

**What you can do in the meantime**

Keep your family's vaccine appointments, bring any questions to your healthcare provider, and stay tuned. Voices for Vaccines will track these developments and share updates as soon as new information is available.

Because ACIP is an independent group of medical and public-health experts who develop recommendations on the use of vaccines in the United States, ongoing independence is essential. We will continue to advocate for a committee driven by science, not politics, so families have the clear, reliable guidance they need to stay healthy.