

Kennedy's anti-vaccine panel deepens assault on childhood vaccines

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Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s handpicked vaccine advisory panel deepened its systematic attack on childhood immunizations Wednesday, voting to dismantle decades of evidence-based vaccine policy in favor of ideological opposition to public health measures.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), whose members Kennedy selected for their shared anti-vaccine stance, opened its two-day meeting by immediately targeting the MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella, varicella) combination vaccine and hepatitis B birth dose, two interventions that have saved countless lives and nearly eliminated preventable childhood diseases.

In its most significant action, the panel voted to no longer recommend the MMRV combination vaccine for children under 4, replacing it with separate MMR and varicella shots. While Kennedy's appointees cited concerns about febrile seizures—which occur in fewer than one per 1,000 doses—experts warn the real consequence will be reduced vaccine uptake, greater inconvenience for families, and dangerous gaps in immunization among vulnerable children.

Even more devastating is ACIP's planned delay of the hepatitis B vaccine from birth to one month of age, which will be voted on on Friday. The decision, a foregone conclusion, will mark an ideological assault on the universal approach that has nearly eradicated childhood hepatitis B in the United States.

This reckless change abandons a critical safety net, exposing newborns—especially those born to mothers with undiagnosed infections or lacking early healthcare access—to preventable lifelong infection and liver cancer. With only 85 percent of mothers receiving proper hepatitis B screening, delaying the birth dose leaves thousands of infants vulnerable during their highest-risk period.

These policy shifts reflect not scientific consensus but Kennedy's anti-vaccine agenda. The newly constituted ACIP has been purged of vaccine expertise and packed with ideological allies who have spent years undermining public confidence in immunization.

The ACIP has functioned for decades as the principal body

for US vaccination policy, whose practice is mirrored and adopted internationally. Unlike previous meetings, this one is unfolding under unprecedented scrutiny as Kennedy's newly appointed members, many with limited vaccine expertise, a track record of public skepticism and ties to advocacy circles, steer the conversation toward ideological goals, not scientific consensus.

Kennedy fired nearly all 17 committee members in June, replacing them with appointees chosen for their willingness to challenge established science rather than their credentials. Many of them opposed vaccine mandates, as well as other critical public health measures, throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, especially during its early and deadliest waves.

The panel's chair, Martin Kulldorff, co-authored the Great Barrington Declaration, which advocated allowing COVID-19 to spread freely through the population while claiming vulnerable people could somehow be protected. This "manifesto of death," as the WSWS aptly termed it, exemplified the deadly consequences of prioritizing ideology over public health science.

Among the new ACIP members are Catherine Stein, an epidemiologist who has argued COVID vaccine mandates are unethical; Dr. Kirk Milhoan, who testified before Congress about vaccine-related myocarditis based on anecdotal reports; and Hillary Blackburn, whose work focuses on faith-based pharmacy approaches.

Friday's session of the ACIP meeting threatens even greater damage, with the panel expected to remove COVID vaccines from the recommended schedule for children. This move would immediately jeopardize vaccine access for millions who rely on Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance coverage, as insurers typically only cover ACIP-recommended vaccines. Under US law, insurers and government programs often only cover vaccines recommended by ACIP.

The timing could not be more cruel. The US is in the midst of its 11th wave of the COVID pandemic, with nearly half the population infected this year alone. Recent studies

indicate that the rates of Long COVID globally have reached 36 percent, according to a large meta-analysis of 144 contributing studies, yet Kennedy's panel appears determined to strip protection from the most vulnerable.

Medical experts have condemned the committee's exaggeration of vaccine risks while ignoring their overwhelming benefits. Dr. Nicola Klein of Kaiser Permanente emphasized that febrile seizure risk "after any measles-containing vaccine is low: less than one febrile seizure per 1,000 injections." These seizures, while alarming to parents, are transient and cause no lasting harm.

Experts warn that the ACIP's focus on rare and transient risks is not just misleading but potentially dangerous. By overemphasizing the remote chance of post-vaccine seizures, the committee has essentially sown the seeds of mistrust into the consciousness of families who will possibly reconsider if these vaccines are to be trusted. This is tantamount to a form of medical or public health malpractice that endangers the life and well-being of children.

Professor Adam Finn, British pediatrician and vaccine expert at the University of Bristol, explained that "even if a child has a febrile seizure after vaccination, their outcomes are no different to febrile seizures following a fever from another cause, such as an infection."

CDC's own experts presented data at the meeting, confirming these conclusions. Yet, the panel persisted with recommendations that break from established science. Public health leaders caution that these changes could increase barriers, delay needed vaccines and ultimately make US children more susceptible to serious preventable diseases.

Wednesday's Senate hearing revealed the political manipulation behind these decisions. Former CDC Director Susan Monarez testified that Kennedy demanded she "pre-approve recommendations without reviewing the evidence" and fire scientific experts "without cause." When she refused to compromise scientific integrity, Kennedy had her fired after just 29 days in office.

Monarez's testimony exposed Kennedy's contempt for evidence-based medicine. He reportedly told her the childhood vaccine schedule lacked scientific support and that CDC officials were "killing children and they don't care."

Both Monarez and former Chief Medical Officer Debra Houry voiced alarm that the revamped ACIP was being steered by "ideological bias and lack of scientific expertise," rather than objective, data-driven analysis. "The medical community is deeply concerned about planned changes to the childhood vaccine schedule, which may not be grounded in science," Monarez warned the panel. Houry reinforced these concerns, stating, "Scientific guidance should never be replaced by politics or advocacy. When ideology trumps

data, children's lives are put at risk."

The Infectious Diseases Society of America, representing over 13,000 experts, condemned the committee's lack of transparency and expertise. Medical organizations have called for Kennedy's resignation, recognizing that his policies threaten to reverse a century of progress in protecting children from preventable diseases.

This assault on vaccination represents more than medical malpractice. It constitutes a class attack on working families who depend on public health programs. By making vaccines harder to access and more expensive, Kennedy's policies will disproportionately harm the very populations that vaccines were designed to protect.

The American Medical Association has warned that "vaccine guidance must remain independent and evidence-based," yet Kennedy has systematically replaced scientific expertise with ideological conformity.

Vaccines represent one of humanity's greatest achievements, saving millions of lives annually and serving as the foundation of modern public health. Yet Kennedy's ACIP threatens to unravel this progress, replacing evidence with ideology and endangering the health of an entire generation.

If this agenda proceeds unchecked, routine childhood immunization will become a privilege of the wealthy rather than a public health guarantee. The working class, already bearing the heaviest burden of preventable disease, will suffer most from Kennedy's ideological crusade against scientific medicine.

The stakes could not be higher. A century of public health progress hangs in the balance as Kennedy's vaccine panel begins its systematic destruction of the programs that have protected children in the US and globally. Only a mass mobilization of the working class, medical professionals and public health experts can halt this dangerous assault on scientific medicine and restore evidence-based vaccine policy.



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