

June 13, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

This week, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary (HHS) Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced significant changes to the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). An independent panel of health experts entrusted with developing recommendations on the administration of lifesaving vaccines, ACIP has helped protect millions of families in Illinois and across the country in since 1960. The Secretary's announcements, both the removal of all 17 existing members on June 9, 2025 and the announcement of 8 new members on June 11, 2025, come just weeks before ACIP's scheduled June 2025 meeting. At this meeting the committee was planning to make recommendations related to the upcoming fall respiratory illness season.

ACIP has been historically comprised of respected, independent experts in pediatrics, immunology, vaccinology, and epidemiology, including, most recently, IDPH's own Immunization Section Chief, Karyn Lyons, a nurse and a longtime public servant who has led immunization efforts at the state and county level. The Committee reviews evidence and votes to recommend who should receive which vaccines and when. Once ACIP voting members reach consensus, recommendations are submitted to the CDC Director to approve, amend, or reject. These recommendations become official CDC policy once adopted by CDC Director that has subsequent implications on access and coverage for these vaccines.

IDPH, as well as clinicians in Illinois, have relied on the review of publicly broadcast ACIP proceedings to confidently incorporate their approved recommendations as standards of care for Illinois's healthcare and public health professionals. The integrity of this process has been fundamentally important to physicians and pediatricians like me, allowing me to feel confident in the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines I recommended to my patients.

The unprecedented changes made to ACIP this week have now created great uncertainty within the medical and public health community. This abrupt removal of all existing members, followed immediately by the appointment of a number of new members, adds further confusion and brings distrust in the process by which clinical guidance and recommendations will be created at the federal level. Many Illinois clinicians no longer feel comfortable that the decisions coming from the federal government are following the robust scientific processes that are in the best interest of their patients.

[As I stated last week](#), IDPH will continue to be guided by independent, transparent, and collaborative processes using the most up-to-date scientific evidence to make our clinical recommendations. The recent actions by HHS had already prompted IDPH to bolster our own statewide, independent process of gathering data and convening experts, including our own Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee, to develop guidelines and recommendations. This week's news further confirms that this decision is necessary now more than ever. IDPH leaders, including myself, have also been in contact with other states as we navigate this uncharted territory.

IDPH will work with providers and partners around the state and country to provide the most accurate and timely information to you – the people we serve. IDPH will ensure that Illinois providers and residents have the credible information they need to make informed health care decisions.

Yours in good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sameer Vohra". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Sameer Vohra, MD, JD, MA
Director
Illinois Department of Public Health