

June 18, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

The undersigned medical professional organizations are writing to express our significant concern regarding your recent action to terminate the entirety of the membership of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ACIP has, for decades, been a trusted advisory to CDC and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services leadership, providing evidence-based recommendations regarding vaccinations through a transparent public process. We strongly urge you to immediately reinstate the terminated members of ACIP and honor their commitments to serve through the end of their appointed terms. When the terms of current ACIP members come to an end, we strongly urge you to follow the long-established public process for ACIP nominations and selection of members, ensuring that experience and subject-matter expertise are prioritized.

Since its founding in 1964, ACIP has played a critical role in protecting the public's health. ACIP panel members, selected for membership based on their significant experience and expertise in the field, provide a critical opportunity for public review of vaccine safety and efficacy data independent of elected or appointed officials. In addition to providing recommendations for childhood immunization schedules, ACIP provides recommendations for routine adult immunizations, collaborates with international partners on strain selection for immunizations updated annually, and plays a critical role in responding to public health emergencies.

We are already seeing a lack of trust in safe and effective vaccines result in a dramatic increase in vaccine-preventable diseases, as evidenced by the ongoing measles outbreak—an outbreak that has sickened over 1,100 and killed three. According to the CDC, 67 percent of cases were reported in children under the age of 20 and 97 percent were not fully vaccinated, had unknown vaccination status, or were not vaccinated at all. Removing a panel of independent experts appointed through a transparent, public nomination process and selected for their expertise on this issue will undoubtedly seek to sow further doubt and cause growing confusion among healthcare professionals and their patients, leading to additional increases in potentially serious illness among our patients.

Additionally, changes to the ACIP panel and ultimately to vaccine recommendations may have severe consequences for the public's access to immunizations. As you know, vaccine coverage by health plans is largely based on CDC vaccine recommendations. Changes to these recommendations can have dramatic consequences on health plans' coverage policies and may

result in these plans dropping coverage for vaccines removed from immunization schedules. For many patients, a lack of coverage will effectively mean a lack of access, thereby raising the risks of increased spread of vaccine-preventable disease. As such, we urge the Administration to honor its early commitment to maintaining access to vaccines for all Americans who want them. This includes promoting policies that ensure continued coverage for routine immunizations.

To truly improve the health of our nation, including the health of our children, we must do everything in our power to protect our patients from vaccine-preventable disease by ensuring continued access to safe and effective vaccines licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. A critical step in preserving access and promoting trust in these life-saving immunizations is to continue our decades long commitment to a transparent and independent review of evidence-based recommendations by unbiased clinical experts. We therefore urge you to immediately reinstate the previously appointed ACIP members so they can continue their important work through the end of their appointments. We look forward to working with you to continue to promote the health and wellbeing of our patients and to ensure continued access to safe and effective vaccination.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association
Academy of Physicians in Clinical Research
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Emergency Medicine
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association of Public Health Physicians
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Lifestyle Medicine
American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Physicians
American College of Rheumatology

American College of Surgeons
American Epilepsy Society
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery
American Society of Dermatopathology
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Neuroimaging
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
Association of Academic Physiatrists
College of American Pathologists
Endocrine Society
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Korean American Medical Association
National Association of Medical Examiners
National Medical Association
Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Dermatology
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
The American Society of Dermatopathology

Medical Association of the State of Alabama
Alaska State Medical Association
Arizona Medical Association
California Medical Association
Colorado Medical Society
Connecticut State Medical Society
Medical Society of Delaware
Medical Society of the District of Columbia
Hawaii Medical Association
Idaho Medical Association
Illinois State Medical Society
Indiana State Medical Association
Iowa Medical Society

Kansas Medical Society
Kentucky Medical Association
Maine Medical Association
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Massachusetts Medical Society
Minnesota Medical Association
Mississippi State Medical Association
Missouri State Medical Association
Montana Medical Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nevada State Medical Association
New Hampshire Medical Society
Medical Society of New Jersey
New Mexico Medical Society
Medical Society of the State of New York
North Carolina Medical Society
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Oklahoma State Medical Association
Oregon Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Rhode Island Medical Society
South Dakota State Medical Association
Tennessee Medical Association
Utah Medical Association
Vermont Medical Society
Medical Society of Virginia
Washington State Medical Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wyoming Medical Society

An open letter to the American people:

With the severe influenza season the U.S. experienced during the 2024-25 respiratory virus season, and the recognition that we will likely see another surge in respiratory viruses this fall, we know strong physician leadership is essential to reducing preventable illness, hospitalizations, and death. Vaccines for influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 remain among the best tools to protect the public against these illnesses and their potentially serious complications—and physicians are among the most trusted voices to recommend them. We come together as physicians from every corner of medicine to reaffirm our commitment to these lifesaving vaccines.

Recent changes to federal immunization review processes raised concerns across the medical and public health community. In this moment of uncertainty, physicians must align around clear, evidence-based guidance for patients.

We commit to working together to promote public understanding and confidence in the use of vaccines to avoid another severe respiratory virus season and resurgence of vaccine-preventable illnesses and deaths. We call on our partners—from insurers to hospitals to public health agencies—to ensure vaccines remain available to patients without cost sharing.

The health and safety of the public remains our top priority, and we will continue to support evidence-based immunizations to help prevent severe disease and protect public health.

Your continued partners in health,

American Medical Association
Academy of Physicians in Clinical Research
Alaska State Medical Association
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association of Public Health Physicians
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Correctional Physicians
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians

American College of Rheumatology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
American Osteopathic Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Neuroimaging
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
Arizona Medical Association
California Medical Association
College of American Pathologists
Colorado Medical Society
Endocrine Society
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality
Hawaii Medical Association
Idaho Medical Association
Illinois State Medical Society
Indiana State Medical Association
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Kentucky Medical Association
Louisiana State Medical Society
Maine Medical Association
Massachusetts Medical Society
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Medical Association of Georgia
Medical Association of the State of Alabama
Medical Society of DC
Medical Society of Delaware
Medical Society of the State of New York
Michigan State Medical Society
Minnesota Medical Association
Mississippi State Medical Association
Missouri State Medical Association
Montana Medical Association

Nebraska Medical Association
New Mexico Medical Society
North Carolina Medical Society
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Oklahoma State Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Rhode Island Medical Society
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Dermatology
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
South Dakota State Medical Association
Texas Medical Association
Vermont Medical Society
Washington State Medical Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wyoming Medical Society

July 31, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

On behalf of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) and the undersigned organizations, we write to express our concerns about your recent decision to terminate the membership of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ACIP has served as a critical body in public health for over five decades, providing expert, evidence-based recommendations on immunization practices. We are deeply concerned that removing members of this independent panel undermines both the transparency and scientific integrity of the immunization process.

As specialists in rheumatology, we care for patients with autoimmune diseases and other chronic inflammatory conditions, many of whom are immunocompromised due to their disease or the immunosuppressive treatments they require. For these patients, vaccines play a pivotal role in preventing potentially life-threatening infections. Reliable, expert-driven immunization guidance is vital for maintaining both individual and public health, and we rely heavily on ACIP's work to guide the vaccination decisions we make for these vulnerable populations.

We believe that the decision to terminate ACIP members—who were selected for their extensive expertise in immunology, infectious disease, and clinical practice—compromises the scientific rigor and independence that has defined the committee for decades. The panel's recommendations, grounded in peer-reviewed evidence, are essential for ensuring safe, effective vaccination policies. The loss of these trusted experts raises serious concerns about the future of immunization guidelines and, by extension, the health of our patients.

As you know, we are already witnessing the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, which has led to outbreaks in multiple states. Such outbreaks have significant public health and clinical consequences, particularly for our patients, who may be at higher risk for severe complications from infections due to their underlying health conditions. Disrupting the expert-driven process that ACIP provides will undoubtedly contribute to confusion and mistrust, further exacerbating vaccine hesitancy and putting vulnerable patients at greater risk.

In addition to the clinical and public health concerns, we are also worried about the practical consequences for patients' access to vaccines. Health insurance plans commonly base their coverage on CDC recommendations, which include ACIP's vaccine schedules. Any changes to the ACIP process or its

recommendations could lead to gaps in vaccine coverage, especially for vaccines not included in the updated immunization schedules. For many patients, particularly those with chronic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus, this could mean reduced access to essential immunizations, ultimately increasing the burden of preventable disease.

We urge you to immediately reinstate the previously terminated members of ACIP, allowing them to fulfill their commitments and continue the vital work they have been entrusted with. Their expertise and unbiased review of scientific evidence are critical to ensuring that vaccine recommendations remain accurate, timely, and based on the best available data. Furthermore, we strongly encourage you to follow the established, transparent procedures for selecting new ACIP members, ensuring that appointments are based on the expertise required to support the immunization needs of all Americans.

The ACR and the undersigned organizations stand ready to collaborate with you and your office in maintaining a public health system and putting forward public policy that will actually Make America Healthy Again. We look forward to working together to ensure that ACIP remains a strong, independent voice in guiding immunization practices for the benefit of all.

Sincerely,

The American College of Rheumatology and the Undersigned Organizations

Arizona United Rheumatology Alliance	Nebraska Rheumatology Society
California Rheumatology Alliance	New York State Rheumatology Society
Chicago Rheumatism Society	North Carolina Rheumatology Association
Connecticut Rheumatology Association	Ohio Association of Rheumatology
Georgia Society of Rheumatology	Rheumatism Society of the District of Columbia
Kentuckiana Rheumatology Alliance	Rheumatology Association of Iowa
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association	Rheumatology Society of New Mexico
Maryland Society for the Rheumatic Diseases	State of Texas Association of Rheumatologists
Midwest Rheumatology Association	Tennessee Rheumatology Society
Mississippi Arthritis and Rheumatism Society	Virginia Society of Rheumatology

August 29, 2025

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo,

On behalf of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), representing over 10,000 rheumatologists and rheumatology interprofessional team members, I am writing to express our deep concern regarding the unrest that threatens the scientific integrity of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) prior the Committee's examination of recent actions taken by Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. which appear to undermine evidence-based vaccine policy in the United States.

The ACR is committed to advancing the health of patients living with autoimmune and inflammatory diseases—many of whom rely on vaccines to prevent serious infections due to immunosuppressive therapies. Adults and children with rheumatic disease represent a vulnerable population who require protection against infection not only from their own response to vaccination, but from the immunity of the surrounding population.

The ACR supports the historically rigorous scientific process of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) as well as its development of recommended immunization schedules for the U.S. population as a means of protecting vulnerable patients with rheumatic diseases. This is why the abrupt dismissal of all members of ACIP and the appointment of individuals whose views diverge from established scientific consensus raised serious concerns for our members about the future of vaccine guidance in this country, which we shared in a letter to Secretary Kennedy in June.

Equally troubling now are the policy implications around the termination of CDC Director Dr. Susan Monarez, allegedly for resisting pressure to endorse unscientific changes to vaccine schedules. If Director Monarez was in fact removed from her position for fighting to preserve science-based vaccine decisions, then the impact of the new policies which her removal may have cleared the way for will further erode public trust in vaccines, the CDC, and public health in this country.

These actions, coupled with the resignation of several other senior CDC officials, suggest a pattern that threatens the role of science in policymaking, the credibility of our public health institutions, and the safety of vulnerable patient populations.

The ACR urges the Senate Finance Committee to exercise its oversight authority during the hearing this week on The President's 2026 Health Care Agenda and seek answers to the following from Secretary Kennedy:

1. The rationale and process behind the dismissal and reconstitution of ACIP.
2. The nature of any policy divergence which may have led to the termination of Dr. Monarez so quickly after being nominated by this administration and confirmed on July 29.
3. The qualifications that will be required of a replacement for Dr. Monarez, which would avoid the same conflict while adhering to data-backed medical science.
4. The implications of these changes for immunization guidance, particularly for immunocompromised populations.

Patients with rheumatic diseases depend on clear, evidence-based vaccine recommendations to protect their health. Undermining the CDC's authority and replacing medical expert voices with ideologically driven appointees jeopardizes not only public health but also the trust clinicians and patients place in our nation's health agencies.

We appreciate your leadership and urge you to use this opportunity to ensure that HHS and CDC remain committed to scientific integrity and the protection of public health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carol A. Langford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carol" being more prominent than the last name "Langford".

Carol A. Langford, MD, MHS
President, American College of Rheumatology

CC: Members of the Committee on Finance
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Ranking Member Bill Cassidy, MD