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We, the undersigned medical experts and organizations, share the profound mission to make America healthier. Building on the legacy of vaccine-driven public health improvements in America and across the world, we are encouraged by the many commitments delivered during Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s confirmation process to become Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, particularly those Senator Bill Cassidy referenced [Feb. 4 on the Senate floor](#).

In accordance with these commitments, we recognize a key starting point, as the Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices (ACIP) which was scheduled to meet Feb. 26-28, 2025, in Atlanta. ACIP has a full agenda of critical, vaccine-related decisions, including discussion linked to deadly illnesses like meningococcal disease. There is great benefit to Americans in the meeting proceeding as scheduled.

Each ACIP meeting holds tremendous weight and relevance. Infectious diseases are constantly evolving opponents; vaccines are among the best tools for constantly adapting and responding to the latest public health threats. ACIP meetings, which review the latest vaccination data, vote on recommendations, and produce public transparency via a live video stream, three times a year, are the exact activities in which a thoughtful, transparent and well-organized scientific community engages.

Making America healthy requires healthy discussion and timely, evidence-based decisions. This meeting is no different.

The public agenda, which was finalized for a month, touches upon a range of important topics. Those include meningococcal disease, which college students — living and socializing in close quarters — possess a higher risk to contract relative to non-college students.[1] In 2023, the U.S. experienced a 10-year-high of 438 confirmed and probable cases, and this trend continued with a 23% increase in cases during the first 39 weeks of 2024 compared with the same period in 2023.[2] Last year, the Georgia Department of Public Health issued a public health alert after confirming 28 cases and four related deaths since 2023.[3] Discussing vaccines against this dangerous pathogen at the meeting will give parents, young adults, and their healthcare providers the information needed to make health decisions before a new school year in the fall. Talks in Atlanta will encompass younger ages, too.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) continues to wreak havoc across the U.S. For children younger than 1, RSV is considered the most common cause of pneumonia and bronchiolitis.[4] On average, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), RSV results in 100,000-150,000 hospitalizations for American adults 60 and older.[5] There were between 5,700 and 14,000 total RSV deaths in the U.S. from Oct. 1, 2024, to Feb. 1.[6] Furthermore, each region in Florida recently saw a substantial increase in RSV-related emergency department visits for children under 5 compared with the previous three-year average.[7] Though RSV cases tend to peak in December and January, cases continue into March and April and can vary significantly in timing within the U.S.[8] RSV vaccines will generate substantial conversation at the meeting.

Pregnant and breastfeeding mothers have unique considerations when traveling abroad, including elevated risk in certain countries to an infected mosquito bite. In 2024, nearly 200 Americans contracted chikungunya virus outside the U.S., per CDC tracking.[9] The case number, highest since 2016, saw a higher-than-expected association with travel to India, although the painful viral infection is also endemic in other regions, including Brazil.[10] ACIP plans to delve into that topic, helping Americans educate and prepare themselves to mitigate that number climbing in 2025. The meeting's timing affords a buffer before many Americans travel to affected areas during the spring and summer months.

Beyond individual topics and votes, the three-day ACIP meeting creates an invaluable touch point within the scientific community. Work groups and discussions help cultivate relationships, promote agility, and develop the collaborative, data-driven problem solving required to respond efficiently to a public health crisis. There is also typically a public comment period, which was never made available. Freedom of communication from the public is critical.

Holding this critical meeting and reconciling the absent portal for public remarks would represent a meaningful early follow-through from the Trump administration and its new HHS Secretary to ensure Americans receive the information needed to protect themselves against vaccine-preventable illnesses, confirming immunization's importance in the mission to make America healthier.

We stand ready to assist in efforts to improve health in America.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research

Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Medical Association

American Osteopathic Association

American Society of Consultant Pharmacists

AMR.Solutions

Arthritis Foundation

CancerCare

Caregiver Action Network

Community Catalyst

Families Fighting Flu

Gerontological Society of America

Global Coalition on Aging

HealthyWomen

Hydrocephalus Association

Infectious Diseases Society of America

National Alliance for Caregiving

National Minority Quality Forum

NTM Info & Research, Inc.

Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease

Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease

Prevent Blindness

RetireSafe

Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America

The COSHAR Healthy Communities Foundation

Vaccinate Your Family

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