

# What is ACIP?

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)<sup>1</sup> is a public-facing, transparent committee established by Congress and convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ACIP members provide expert perspectives and advice on the use of vaccines in the U.S. population. According to its charter, ACIP is required to meet at least three times a year. At these meetings, members of the general public can attend and there is an opportunity for the public to offer comment on issues under deliberation by the committee. For more than 50 years, ACIP's recommendations have shaped the landscape for vaccine recommendations.

## Who Serves on ACIP?

Medical professionals, scientists, and researchers who have a background in public health and immunization practice, as well as consumer and community representatives who provide a societal perspective on the use of vaccines make up ACIP. Nineteen members are nominated to serve a four-year term as Special Government Employees, including the Chair.<sup>2</sup> The Committee also consists of six non-voting ex-officio members from across the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Health Resources and Services Administration; the Food and Drug Administration; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; National Institutes of Health; Indian Health Service; and the Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy, as well as a number of public health and provider stakeholder organization representatives who serve as non-voting liaison members. ACIP voting members must adhere to a strict conflict of interest policy that requires disclosure of any potential conflicts at the start of their term and at the beginning of each ACIP meeting. Members who have disclosed a conflict are prohibited from participating in working groups and votes on that topic.<sup>3</sup> While the number of ACIP members with disclosed conflicts only represent a small percentage of the total number of individuals who have served on ACIP, information on the individual members and conflicts is available to the public.<sup>4</sup>

## Key Responsibilities of the ACIP:



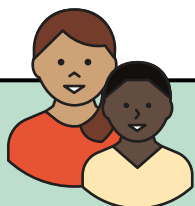
**Develops and Updates Recommendations for the Use of Vaccines:** This includes determining the age groups, dosages, and schedules for vaccines, as well as specifying which populations should receive them (e.g., children, adults, immunocompromised individuals, etc.).<sup>5</sup>



**Updates Guidelines:** The committee reviews scientific research, clinical data, and epidemiological trends related to vaccine safety, effectiveness, and potential side effects.<sup>6</sup> As new vaccines become available or as new evidence arises about existing vaccines, the ACIP revises its guidelines.



**Health Policy Support:** ACIP's recommendations are used by public health agencies, healthcare providers, and policymakers to develop vaccination programs, policies, and practices. The committee plays a significant role in shaping immunization programs like the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC).



## THE VACCINE SCHEDULE

ACIP recommendations form two immunization schedules, which are updated annually:

1. **Childhood and adolescent immunization schedule**
2. **Adult immunization schedule**

Once ACIP recommendations are adopted by the Director of the CDC and the Secretary of the HHS, these recommendations are published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), become official policy, and are incorporated into the appropriate immunization schedule.

## Why is ACIP Important?

ACIP's guidelines and recommendations are widely utilized and form the foundation for a number of policies across the U.S. healthcare system, including guidance for providers and patients on who should receive certain vaccines, at what intervals, determine health insurance coverage of vaccines, as well as link to provider billing and reimbursement in various healthcare settings. Additionally, these policies govern vaccine coverage, access, and cost-sharing for millions of Americans with Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial insurance plans.

Congress has referred to ACIP recommendations in several pieces of cornerstone healthcare legislation. Dozens of states across the country have also relied upon ACIP recommendations as a basis for granting provider status in offering certain vaccines in a particular healthcare setting, as well as guiding a provider's ability to administer vaccines to a particular age cohort.

## What Can Congress Do?

Congress can ensure the work and recommendations of the ACIP remain transparent, accessible, and accountable to patients, providers, and policymakers through the following actions:

### **Limiting arbitrary changes to the ACIP charter and membership that could result in disruption to patients in the following ways:**

- ◆ Patients are not able to easily access and receive desired vaccinations;
- ◆ Different provider types are unsure if a certain vaccine is appropriate for a particular patient, or it is unclear if their patient has coverage for a certain vaccine; and
- ◆ Health insurance plans don't have clarity on which vaccines should be covered for different population age groups and at what cost to the patient.

### **Codify ACIP to achieve the following:**

- ◆ Ensure meetings remain open to the public;
- ◆ Require time for public comment;
- ◆ Make certain FDA-approved vaccines are reviewed in a timely fashion;
- ◆ Ensure the CDC Director acts upon ACIP vaccine recommendations and guidelines swiftly;
- ◆ Require that approved vaccine recommendations are published and made publicly available to providers and patients; and
- ◆ Provide for qualified individuals to continue to serve as voting and non-voting liaison committee members.

## About AVAC

The Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC) is a diverse group of health care providers, vaccine innovators, pharmacies, public health organizations and patient and consumer groups. AVAC's mission is to raise awareness, improve access and increase utilization of vaccines among adults. Near universal access to immunizations for children has been one of the greatest public health accomplishments of the 20th century. AVAC seeks to achieve the same level of success for adult immunization.

[www.adultvaccinesnow.org](http://www.adultvaccinesnow.org)

## REFERENCES

- 1 ACIP is authorized under Section 222 of the Public Health Service Act and is governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (P.L. 92-463)
- 2 <https://www.cdc.gov/acip/downloads/acip-charter.pdf>
- 3 <https://www.cdc.gov/acip/downloads/ACIP-conflicts-interest-policy.pdf>
- 4 [Conflicts of Interest Disclosures of ACIP Members | ACIP | CDC](#)
- 5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). CDC. Accessed February 25, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/index.html>
- 6 Grohskopf LA, Sokolow LZ, Walker WH. The role of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices in the United States. *Vaccine*. 2021;39(45):6738-6743. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.08.079.