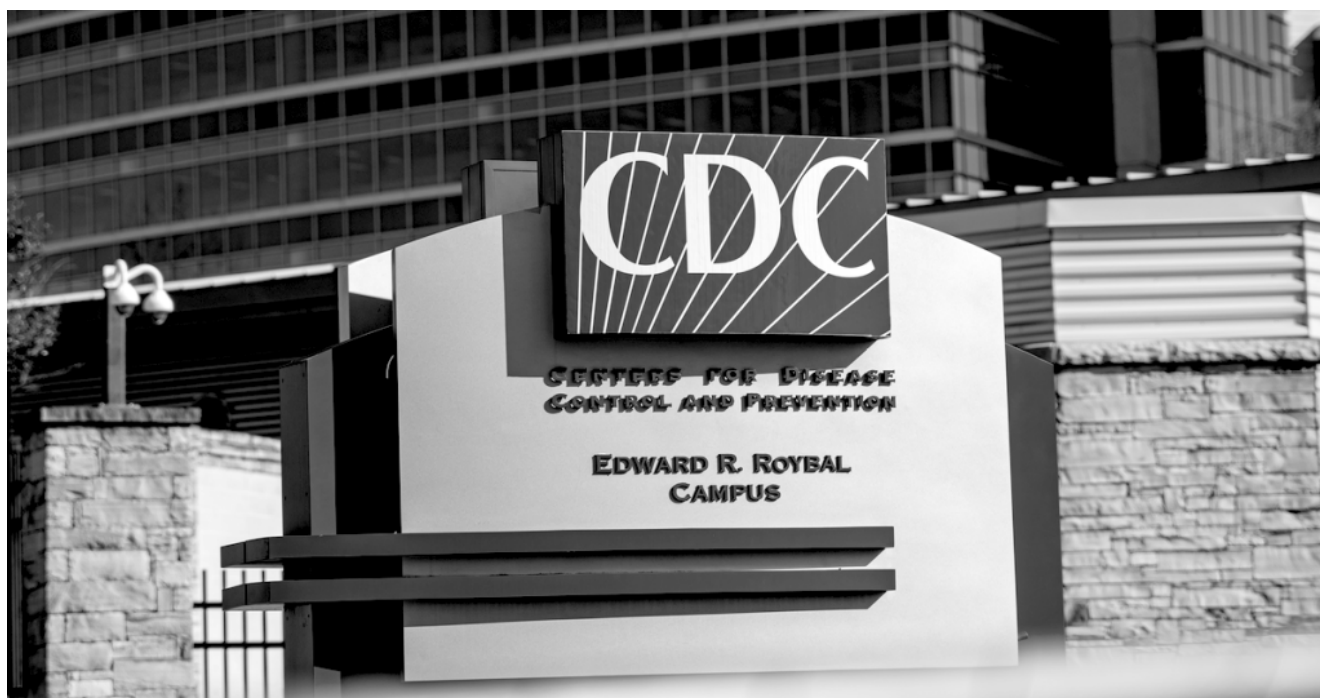


# CDC Vaccine Advisory Panel Left Half-Staffed by HHS



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) vaccine advisory panel entrusted with making vaccine recommendations has been left half-staffed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), leaving the committee without a quorum and a chairman for their upcoming meeting on vaccines.

The [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) (ACIP) is a group of 15 medical and public health experts who vote on vaccine recommendations and [provide guidance](#) to the director of CDC and HHS on which licensed vaccines should be used to control diseases and their appropriate use.

Currently, there are [eight vacancies on the committee](#). Four of the seven remaining members will finish their terms at the end of June, and there is currently no chairperson for the committee. Ongoing vacancies could pose a challenge to formulating vaccination policies and guidelines as ACIP [uses subcommittees](#), or work groups, to review unpublished data and make recommendations for ACIP meetings. According to the CDC, these work groups are active all year to stay current on

specific vaccines and safety information.

To become a member of ACIP, experts must be selected by HHS after undergoing an application and nomination process with the CDC. According to the CDC's website, 14 of the 15 members have expertise in vaccinology, immunology, pediatrics, internal medicine, nursing, family medicine, virology, public health, infectious diseases, or preventive medicine. The final member of the panel is a consumer representative who represents social and community aspects of vaccination. A member may serve 180 days after the [expiration of their term](#) if a successor hasn't been appointed.

It's unclear why the CDC's vaccine advisory panel has been left half-staffed. A CDC spokesperson [told STAT](#) the agency recommended nine new people for ACIP membership last year, and some dossiers have been with HHS since early 2023. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra has yet to sign off on the CDC's nominees.

"I truly don't know what the holdup would be," Kelly Moore, a former ACIP member and CEO of Immunize.org, told STAT. "My assumption is clearly it's stuck on someone's desk, and they're not signing for some reason, but what that is, I don't have insight."

Heather Purcell, HHS deputy assistant secretary for public affairs, told STAT in an email that the recommendations were being reviewed and would be processed as soon as possible.

The ACIP is not the only CDC advisory committee that reports to HHS that appears to be struggling to obtain new members. The CDC's [Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee](#) (HICPAC) is supposed to have 14 members. HICPAC's website shows five vacancies with no chairperson. Without a quorum, the advisory committee can't meet.

Unlike HICPAC, the ACIP has a provision in its charter that provides a solution when there are not enough voting members.

In addition to 15 voting members, ACIP includes six [ex officio members](#) who represent other federal agencies and may temporarily vote when fewer than a quorum is present.

These temporary members include representatives of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Indian Health Service, the National Institutes of Health, the Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy, and the Health Resources and Services Administration.

The [next ACIP meeting](#) will be held on Feb. 28 and 29. The [agenda will include](#) discussions on numerous vaccines, including influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, the chikungunya vaccine, and the respiratory syncytial virus vaccine.