

# Who's Calling the Shots for Kids? CDC 'Independent' Vaccine Advisors With Ties to U.S. Health Agencies, Big Pharma



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "independent vaccine advisers" [voted 15-0](#) on Oct. 20 to add [COVID-19 vaccines](#) to the 2023 childhood, adolescent and adult immunization schedules, prompting Americans to question the integrity of the agency's panel tasked with making vaccine recommendations for kids.

Schools and state legislatures use the CDC's immunization schedules to [set vaccine requirements](#) for students who wish to attend school, which will inevitably force millions of children across the U.S. who live in states where there are no religious or philosophical exemptions to receive COVID-19 vaccines. Only [21 states](#) have [explicitly banned](#) mandating the shots for students.

According to the CDC, its [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) (ACIP) committee consists of medical and public health experts who develop recommendations on the use of vaccines in the U.S.

Their recommendations form the basis of the CDC's [public health guidance](#) for the "safe use of vaccines and related biological products," and set the agency's immunization schedule.

Since the first COVID-19 vaccine was authorized on Dec. 14, 2020, people have witnessed what can only be described as shocking guidance issued by the CDC, which not only signed off on COVID-19 vaccines for kids but recently authorized [bivalent boosters](#) for children that have not been subjected to human clinical trials.

Although the CDC and corporate media claim the agency's vaccine advisory panel making COVID-19 vaccine recommendations are [independent experts](#) capable of rendering objective opinions, and by extension, objective votes, this is simply not true. Every single panel member has ties to either U.S. regulatory agencies or the pharmaceutical companies that manufacture the vaccines they're tasked with regulating.

## **What is the ACIP committee and who decides who's on it?**

The ACIP was [established](#) under Section 222 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. §217a) and is governed by the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App 2).

The ACIP provides advice and guidance to the CDC's director on the use of vaccines. If accepted, the recommendations are published as official recommendations by the CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

According to the [CDC's website](#), the ACIP includes 15 voting members tasked with making vaccine recommendations for the entire country. Members are selected by the secretary of HHS following an application and nomination process.

This is the same HHS that [gave billions of U.S. tax dollars](#) to pharmaceutical companies to develop and manufacture COVID-19 vaccines, gave [billions to Pfizer](#) and [Moderna](#) to purchase vaccine doses, collaborated with Johnson & Johnson to [produce millions](#) of “investigational” vaccine doses, was given [\\$10 billion](#) by the Biden administration to “expand access” to vaccines, launched a [public education campaign](#) with only positive messaging to increase confidence in and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, gave [\\$3 billion](#) to the CDC to fund similar initiatives, and through public relations agencies, contracted with the [corporate media](#) to [advertise](#) only positive messaging about COVID-19 vaccines – depriving the American people of informed consent.

Currently, 14 [members of ACIP](#) have expertise in “vaccinology, immunology, pediatrics, internal medicine, nursing, family medicine, virology, public health, infectious diseases and/or preventive medicine. One member is a “consumer representative” who provides insight on the “social and community aspects” of vaccination.

In addition to 15 voting members, ACIP includes eight “[ex officio members](#),” who have their position simply because of the office they hold. These ex officio members represent other federal agencies with “responsibility for immunization programs” in the U.S.

Ex officio members are expected to “represent the position and views of their sponsoring organizations, and to contribute to Committee discussions when issues of importance to their organization are being discussed and when they possess information important to the discussion.” Ex officio and liaison members also may serve on work groups to “provide

expert advice” and apprise the work group of the position their organization endorses.

According to the [CDC](#), ex officio members generally do not vote; however, if fewer than a quorum of ACIP members are eligible to vote due to absence or other conflicts of interest, the designee can temporarily designate the ex officio member – with obvious conflicts of interest – as a voting member.

There are also 30 non-voting representatives of “[liaison organizations](#)” with “related immunization expertise,” such as the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, America’s Health Insurance Plans, American Immunization Registry Association, American Medical Association, American Pharmacists Association, Association for Prevention Biotechnology Industry Organization and National Medical Association.

Although the 15 voting members and representatives serve on the ACIP committee voluntarily – allowing the CDC to claim they are an “independent” panel of vaccine advisors – these members have conflicts of interest with both the CDC and pharmaceutical companies whose products they are regulating.

The [one member](#) of the current ACIP committee with no medical expertise runs an organization founded in the name of her child who allegedly died of pertussis and is funded by the CDC to promote vaccines for kids.

Excluded from these meetings are experts and scientists who have questioned COVID-19 vaccines and treatment protocols, organizations like the [Frontline COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance](#), [Association of American Physicians and Surgeons](#), [America’s Frontline Doctors](#) and the almost one million doctors and experts who signed on to the [Great Barrington Declaration](#).

There is not one member of the committee [representing the thousands](#) of vaccine-injured children, nor any [organizations](#) advocating for the millions of reported [COVID-19 vaccine injuries](#) represented.

It would seem on its face, that the CDC's "independent" committee of vaccine advisors is biased and financially incentivized in other ways toward creating recommendations that favor a particular outcome. The only challenges to scientific consensus they receive come from the handful of public submissions – both for and against vaccine policy – that are allowed to be featured during a meeting.

Although thousands of [public comments](#) are posted for ACIP on the CDC's website and agency [guidelines state](#) "comments will be addressed as soon as possible," public commenting appears to be a mere formality, giving the public a false impression their voices are being heard.

As quickly as the CDC moves, and given the fact they had published an [interim 2023 immunization schedule](#) prior to the meeting that included the COVID-19 vaccines, it's likely most of these comments joined the internet abyss of the millions ignored before them.

## **CDC 'independent' vaccine advisors have ties to CDC and Big Pharma**

According to the CDC, the 15 members of its ACIP committee making the COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for U.S children and adults include:

1. [Lynne Bahta](#) is a registered nurse and the immunization program clinical consultant for the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). In the fiscal year 2021, [MDH received](#) \$11.6 million in Public Health Emergency Preparedness funding from the CDC and \$34 million in

crisis response funding for COVID-19.

The CDC on Sept. 20, 2022, announced [\\$90 million in funding](#) to establish the Pathogen Genomics Centers of Excellence (PGCoE) network. The PGCoE network is a genomic surveillance program designed to “foster and improve innovation and technical capacity in pathogen genomics, molecular epidemiology, and bioinformatics to better prevent, control and respond to microbial threats.”

MDH, where Bahta is employed, is one of five recipients of the \$90 million CDC grant.

2. [Dr. Beth Bell](#) is a clinical professor in the Department of Global Health at the University of Washington School of Public Health; however, she spent most of her career in “government service” at the CDC before joining the CDC’s “independent” panel of vaccine advisors. Bell started working with the CDC in 1992 and is the [former director](#) of the agency’s National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases.
3. [Dr. Oliver Brooks](#) is the chief medical officer at Watts Healthcare Corporation in Los Angeles, California. He is a past president of the National Medical Association, chairman of the Immunize LA Families Coalition and past president and [current director](#) of the California Immunization Coalition – which worked with [Vaccinate California](#) to secure the passing of SB 277 that removed the religious vaccine exemption for children. According to [Dollars for Docs](#) and [Open Payments](#), Brooks received thousands of dollars as a consultant and promotional speaker for vaccines prior to joining the CDC’s “independent” committee of vaccine advisors.

Brooks received payments from Sanofi Pasteur, Inc. for Pentacel (DTaP-IPV/Hib 5-in-1 vaccine), Menactra (meningococcal conjugate vaccine), and influenza

vaccines (Flublok Quadrivalent and high-dose Fluzone), GlaxoSmithKline for SHINGRIX (shingles), Merck for Gardasil and RotaTeq, Adacel for its Tdap vaccine and PREVNAR 13, manufactured by Pfizer.

4. [Dr. Wilbur Chen](#) is a professor of medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and director of the University of Maryland Baltimore Travel Medicine Practice. Chen is also an investigator within the Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Unit and Collaborative Influenza Vaccine Innovation Centers, both of which are funded by the [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#) (NIAID) run by [Dr. Anthony Fauci](#). The University of Maryland has received [millions of dollars](#) in grants from the NIAID and the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH). The university's "Prevention Research Center" (PRC) is one of 26 PRCs funded by the CDC's 2019–2024 funding cycle.

According to the CDC, in April 2021, the agency funded all 26 PRCs to form the PRC [Vaccine Confidence Network](#) (VCN) to support the agency's [vaccine strategy](#) for COVID-19.

5. [Dr. Sybil Cineas](#) is board-certified in internal medicine and pediatrics and serves as the associate program director for the Brown Internal Medicine-Pediatrics Residency Program. Brown University on Sept. 9, 2021, [announced](#) it received \$4.9 million to fund a two-year project designed to study the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in seniors. Brown University [received additional funding](#) from the CDC bringing the total granted from August 2021 to August 2023 to \$6.1 million.
6. [Dr. Matthew Daley](#) is a practicing pediatrician and senior clinical investigator for the Kaiser Permanente Colorado Institute [for Health Research](#). According to the



CDC's [website](#), Daley has "extensive experience" in vaccine safety, parental vaccine hesitancy and immunization services delivery. He is also an investigator for the Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD) – "a collaborative project that exists to monitor vaccine safety and conduct studies about rare and serious adverse events following immunization."

Kaiser Permanente is a listed partner of the [World Economic Forum](#), which hosted [Event 201](#) with the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Event 201 was a high-level pandemic exercise centered around a "novel coronavirus."

Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research receives the [majority of its funding](#) from federal agencies such as the NIH, CDC, U.S. Food and Drug Administration and HHS, it also receives funding from pharmaceutical companies, such as Merck, AstraZeneca, Pfizer and the Gates Foundation.

Kaiser Permanente in June 2021 announced a slew of COVID-19 vaccine initiatives to support the White House's then goal of getting 70% of U.S. adults to receive a COVID vaccine by July 4. They gave \$10 million in new grants to 100 schools, churches and other organizations to promote vaccines and ran a social media campaign targeting young adults ages 18 to 30.

7. [Dr. Camille Kotton](#) is the clinical director of the Transplantation Infectious Disease and Compromised Host Program at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). According to [Open Payments](#), Kotton made \$36,439 in 2021 for consulting with pharmaceutical companies, including Merck and Takeda Pharmaceuticals, which has previously manufactured products for Pfizer and partnered with [Moderna and Novavax](#) to "help accelerate the availability of COVID-19 vaccines" in Japan. That same year, [Takeda paid](#) over \$12 million to MGH for



a license or royalty for Entyvio, a monoclonal antibody medication used to treat inflammatory bowel diseases. Pfizer in 2021 granted \$541,249 to MGH.

8. [Dr. James Loehr](#) is a family practice physician in New York. According to the CDC, he has spent more than 30 years “counseling patients every day on the benefits of vaccines.” Prior to serving as an independent vaccine advisor for the CDC, he was a member of the ACIP influenza working group. Loehr has played a pivotal role during the [expedited review](#) of COVID-19 vaccines for kids.
9. [Dr. Grace Lee](#) is the associate chief medical officer for practice innovation at Stanford Children’s Health and professor of pediatrics at Stanford University School of Medicine. She is also the former principal investigator with the CDC’s VSD project.
10. [Dr. Sarah Long](#) is a professor of pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine and an attending at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia. Long has been one of the most [enthusiastic supporters of COVID-19 vaccines](#).
11. Long came to ACIP from the FDA’s “independent” vaccine advisory panel – the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee – and was also a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases, which is heavily funded by the [same pharmaceutical companies](#) that manufacture [COVID-19 vaccines](#), as well as the [CDC](#).
12. [Veronica McNally](#), another “[independent](#)” vaccine advisor, is the president and CEO of the Franny Strong Foundation (FSF). McNally said she started doing her research on vaccinations after she lost her daughter to pertussis and has “made it her mission to ensure all parents have good information available to make informed decisions about vaccines.” According to its [website](#), the mission of FSF is to

“promote pertussis awareness and boost childhood immunization rates for all vaccine-preventable diseases.” The FSF homepage states that “vaccines save lives” and cites the World Health Organization’s “10 Biggest Global Threats” for 2019, which includes vaccine hesitancy.

“When childhood immunization rates drop, the public health of the entire region, state and nation is threatened,” the website states. The FSF is “proud to partner with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services,” which receives [millions of dollars](#) in funding from the CDC to promote COVID-19 vaccines. They also partner with the Michigan Health & Hospital Association Health Foundation, which developed an [online toolkit](#) to help healthcare providers convince parents to vaccinate their children.

13. [Dr. Katherine Poehling](#) is a professor of pediatrics, epidemiology and prevention at Wake Forest School of Medicine. According to her CDC bio, she’s an “expert on the community impact of vaccines, specifically pneumococcal and influenza vaccines.”

As an independent vaccine advisor to the CDC, Poehling serves as the North Carolina American Academy of Pediatrics immunization representative and has worked with the CDC on its [New Vaccine Surveillance Network](#).

14. [Dr. Pablo Sanchez](#) is a professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University, a neonatologist and a pediatric infectious disease specialist at [Nationwide Children’s Hospital](#) in Columbus, Ohio.

Sanchez was paid \$3,900 in [consultation fees](#) from AstraZeneca in October 2020 and received \$99,755 from Merck for research. Sanchez works with the [Neonatal Research Network](#), which is [part of the NIH](#) and receives additional funding from the NIH and HHS.

15. [Dr. Nirav Shah](#) is the director of Maine's CDC and previously served as the Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health. He is also the "[immediate past president](#)" of the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#) (ASTHO), which has publically applauded the FDA's decision to approve Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine and stands with their members in their "push to get America vaccinated." ASTHO is funded by the CDC and [works closely](#) with both the CDC and HHS to carry out its initiatives. In its 2023 fiscal year [government appropriations document](#), it requested the CDC direct \$1.13 billion to the Section 317 Immunization Program for an aggressive vaccination campaign and to update the Immunization Information System designed to track those receiving vaccines. ASTHO views vaccine hesitancy as an issue that "must be aggressively addressed by every state and local community."
16. [Dr. Helen Keipp Talbot](#) is an internist and infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. Vanderbilt University has deep ties to Pfizer and took a "[leadership role](#)" in COVID-19 vaccine development. They also participated in the "[Coronavirus Efficacy and Safety Study](#)" to test Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA-1273) and have a partnership with AstraZeneca. According to the university's website, the Vanderbilt University Medical Center "played a key role" in the development of Remdesivir – [manufactured](#) by Pfizer and claims their research [assisted with the approval](#) of [COVID-19 vaccines](#) for kids.

Who's really in charge of greenlighting COVID shots for kids? Fifteen "independent advisors" with ties to U.S. regulatory agencies and the pharmaceutical companies whose products

they're supposed to be regulating.