

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 25, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

On behalf of the Congressional Hepatitis Caucus, we are writing to express our extreme concern over your recent dismissal of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the future of vaccine recommendations in this country.

For decades, ACIP has been an American pillar of public health, widely trusted by medical providers, insurers, individuals, and parents across the nation. Their recommendations, including the universal hepatitis B childhood vaccination recommendation, were crafted using sound, evidence-based research and science.

The hepatitis B vaccine is the first anti-cancer vaccine to exist due to its ability to prevent a chronic illness that is the leading cause of liver cancer. Prior to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) universal infant hepatitis B vaccination recommendation – introduced more than 30 years ago – an estimated 18,000 children were infected with hepatitis B every year in the U.S. before they reached the age of 10. Ninety percent of those children developed chronic infections and up to 25% of people infected as babies and children die prematurely from liver cancer and liver failure. With routine birth dose, the U.S. saw a 95% decrease in infant infections. If the recommendation for universal hepatitis B birth dose were removed, thousands of babies would once again become infected with hepatitis B each year as access to the vaccine dropped.

Hepatitis B is a chronic disease that leads to liver cancer in 25% of untreated people. With liver cancer being the sixth leading cause of all cancer deaths in the U.S, this is not the time to move backwards by making it more difficult to access our key prevention tool. It is imperative that we maintain the current hepatitis B vaccine guidelines for babies and children to prevent lifelong chronic liver disease, ensure appropriate access, save money, and eliminate one of the leading causes of liver cancer.

Additionally, hepatitis A is vaccine-preventable, and the vaccine is recommended as part of routine childhood vaccination. Cases of hepatitis A have declined significantly since the vaccine

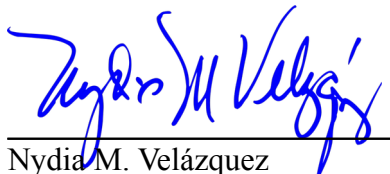
was first recommended; however, 37 states have reported outbreaks reported outbreaks since 2016. While most individuals recover from hepatitis A infection in two to three months, those with chronic liver disease or other health problems may develop severe illness.

We support maintaining the strictest possible approval process for all vaccines and medical treatments. The hepatitis A and B vaccines have undergone a very stringent and rigorous scientific research process, and decades of research prove its safety and efficacy. We would be more than happy to work with you to discuss the current vaccine approval process, any additional vaccine research and data you are seeking, and the importance of maintaining public health through a sound vaccine schedule that includes hepatitis vaccines.

We fully support efforts to combat chronic disease and increase prevention in this country. The hepatitis A and B vaccines support these goals and has done more to prevent chronic disease and cancer than almost any other medical innovation in our lifetimes. Great strides have been made in the last several decades, and countless lives have been saved. To alter the government's recommended vaccination schedule would not only move us backwards but will cause people to die needlessly.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We stand ready to work together with you to combat chronic diseases such as hepatitis and prevent liver cancer.

Sincerely,



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress