



January 22, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

On January 5, 2026, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) rolled out a new childhood immunization schedule. This schedule made significant changes to the existing, evidence-based immunization recommendations that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been publishing over the years with transparent input from experts and members of the public, including families who have been affected by vaccine-preventable diseases. The new schedule was not subject to any public process and was announced after a holiday break, without any opportunity for formal input. These changes were not voted on by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) at a meeting held just weeks prior to this decision, nor has HHS published a robust scientific analysis to justify these changes. In fact, just after the guidelines were released, you said in an [interview with CBS](#) that it may be better if fewer children received an influenza (flu) vaccine, which is not consistent with the [science](#) and puts children at risk of severe outcomes from flu.

Our organizations—the American Society for Meningitis Prevention, Families Fighting Flu, and Vaccinate Your Family—work together to protect people from vaccine-preventable diseases. Our work is motivated by those who were not fortunate enough to be protected—many of whom have joined us in our mission as patient advocates, to share their real-life experiences as a warning to other families. We are asking you to meet with our advocates, who are eager to discuss what these changes mean to families affected by these diseases, like influenza and meningitis—diseases for which you changed the immunization recommendations.

Below are just a few stories about families who have been affected by these dangerous diseases.

- [Joseph](#) was a healthy 5-year-old boy when he died from flu in 2009 during the H1N1 pandemic. As Joseph's mother, Serese always vaccinated her children on time, every time. But unfortunately, the H1N1 monovalent vaccine was not available in her community until after Joseph died. Since 2009, his mother, Serese, has dedicated her career to ensuring other parents do not have to experience the devastating loss her family experienced.

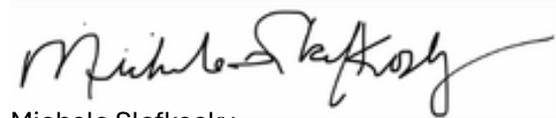
- [Brent](#) was an active 29-year-old “go getter” when he died from flu in 2019. After seven days of being sick, Brent went to urgent care because he was having trouble breathing. The urgent care discharged him with an antibiotic. Just four hours later, Brent died. Now, his father Jeb’s motto as a pediatrician is that that he never wants to meet a parent with a child who ended up in the hospital with something that he could have prevented with a vaccination.
- [Francesca’s](#) college plans abruptly changed when she was diagnosed with meningitis at age 17. Her disease progressed rapidly, and she had to be air-lifted to a different hospital in critical condition—with just a 20% chance of survival. She likely would have received the vaccine at an upcoming physical before leaving for college. She was lucky to survive, but the rehabilitation journey was a years-long battle.

The policies that come out of the CDC have real effects on real people. The ACIP process allows for public comment so that experts making recommendations to the CDC Director have the opportunity to hear directly from the public on those effects. Because that process was circumvented in this major overhaul of the immunization schedule, we respectfully request that you meet with our advocates so that we can explain what these new recommendations will mean to our families, communities, and the people of the United States.

Sincerely,



Amy Pisani, MS
Chief Executive Officer, Vaccinate Your Family



Michele Slafkosky
Executive Director, Families Fighting Flu



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