

Pre-Meeting Session 1: 8:30–9:30 am

Location: RB

Update on U.S Vaccine Policy

MODERATOR: Phyllis Arthur, *Biotechnology Innovation Organization*

Abby Bownas, *Adult Vaccine Access Coalition, NVG LLC*

Richard Hughes IV, *Epstein Becker Green, The George Washington University Law School*

Angela Botticella, *Governors Public Health Alliance*

Erin Abramsohn, *Infectious Disease Prevention Network*



2026 National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit | 1

Abby Bownas
AVAC Manager
Partner, NVG LLC

AVAC

ADULT VACCINE
ACCESS COALITION

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About AVAC

Established in 2015, the Adult Vaccine Access Coalition works to strengthen and enhance access to and utilization of vaccines among adults through federal policy change.

Our 80+ partners including, health care providers, vaccine innovators, public health organizations, and patient and consumer groups.

Policy Priorities:

- Support federal funding for adult immunization programs and infrastructure
- Support and increase access to vaccines
- Support all immunizing providers
- Advocate for the adoption and implementation of immunization best practices
- Educate policymakers on Capitol Hill and in the Administration on the individual and societal value of vaccination

Vaccination Saves Lives and Billions in Health Care and Financial Costs

Despite the availability of vaccines, illnesses such as flu impose a significant burden on individuals, communities, and our economy. Flu most often results in missed days of work that impact employers, local businesses, and the financial health of families. Flu can also result in more devastating long-term health and economic impacts.

Improving flu vaccination uptake—particularly among adults aged 18 and older—can help reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, complications, and deaths. It can also help preserve workforce productivity and ease the burden of disease on already-stretched families and economy health and prosperity.

Flu Costs the U.S. Economy \$29 Billion Annually

A recent economic analysis estimated the cost of illness associated with the flu among adults using health care utilization costs and labor market data. The study explored the potential health and economic impact of increased flu vaccination rates among adults.

The U.S. experienced high rates of flu illnesses during the 2019-2024 season, which resulted in an estimated \$29 billion in total economic burden (\$16 billion in direct health care costs and \$13 billion in productivity losses).

America's Flu Bill
for the 2023-24 Season

Health Care Costs	\$16,000,000,000
Lost Worker Productivity	\$13,000,000,000
Total Due:	\$29,000,000,000

Avoidable with higher vaccination rates

Administration: 2026 At A Glance

Jan

- Presidential Memo on Vaccine Schedule Signed
- CMS Medicaid Core Set Review

Feb

- NIH Director Bhattacharya named acting CDC Director
- Jim O'Neill's Exit from HHS and CDC
- Principal Deputy Director Ralph Abraham steps down
- Calley Means detailed to the White House from HHS
- Dr. Oz and Bhattacharya speak out to address measles

Mar

- Dr. Robert Malone resigns
- Federal Judge rules on AAP vs. Kennedy
- ACIP canceled
- ICD-10 Coordinating Committee meets
- FDA approves 2026-27 influenza strains
- FDA releases Adverse Event Monitoring System "tool"

Apr

- President's FY27 Budget Released
- ACIP Charter Revised/Renewed
- Kennedy Budget Hearings
- Erica Schartz, MD, JD, MPH nominated CDC Director

May

- FDA Changes: Makary steps down, Hoeg exits
- Casey Means nomination pulled, Nicole Saphier, MD nominated to be Surgeon General
- DOD Hegseth rescinds flu vaccine requirement
- USPSTF call for new members
- FDA VRBPAC meeting (May 28)

Staff Changes

On the Horizon: Comment Opportunities: CDC ICD-10, VRPAC, CMS Regulatory

Congress: 2026 At A Glance

Healthcare Discussions in the 119th Congress:

- Affordability/Lowering Health Care Costs
- Waste, Fraud, Abuse
- MAHA/Chronic Disease
- Price Transparency

Where Vaccine Policy Has Come Up:

- FY27 Appropriations Process
 - HHS Secretary Kennedy Budget Hearings x7
 - Mark ups House/Senate (ongoing through July)
- Hearings
 - Senate Nominations (Surgeon General, CDC Director)
 - Healthcare workforce
 - Lowering Healthcare Costs
 - Healthcare Affordability (Drs/hospitals)
 - Covid-19 / Vaccine Safety
- Requests for Information (i.e. PAHPA)
- Legislation (VICP, VFC, flu)
- Letters requesting information
 - Examples: GAO on Hep B; CBO on healthcare costs arising from VPD; Request for info on vaccine cases and religious freedom; Letter on Release of Covid-19 Study; Hep B study in Guinea-Bissau



Axios

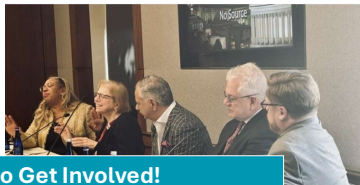


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Engaging in Federal Advocacy

Policy Engagement

- **FY27 Appropriations**
 - Programmatic Ask
 - Immunization Program \$782
 - Hepatitis \$150m
 - Flu \$251m
 - Report Language (across HHS)
- **Potential Legislative Opportunities**
 - Pandemic Preparedness
 - Provider Support
 - VICP (countering bills)
 - Maternal Vaccinations
 - Strengthening Vaccines for Children Program Act
 - Expand Access to Flu
- **Administration Engagement:**
 - Advisory Comments (ACIP, VRPAC)
 - Regulatory Comment (CMS, CDC, HRSA)



Many Ways to Get Involved!

- Call you federal policymaker
- Send Letters
- Set up meetings in District (or DC)
- Responding to Requests for Information
- Offer to be a resource to Congressional members (and their staff)
- Sign on to or submit regulatory comments letters, or letters for the record at hearings
- Share resources - including fact sheets, articles, local data/statistics
- Engage on social media
- And more....

Learn More

Join on the Core Values

Learn More:
abownas@adulthoodvaccinesnow.org
www.adulthoodvaccinesnow.org

Follow Us:
www.linkedin.com/company/avacoalition

@AVACNow





Core Values

Access
People should have easy access to recommended vaccines.

Information
People should have accurate and understandable information about vaccines and opportunities to talk with healthcare providers about which vaccines are right for them and when they should be administered.

Financial Protections
Vaccines should be available at no cost to individuals who choose to get them, including those with private insurance plans, Medicare, Medicaid and the uninsured.

Trustworthy Recommendations
Vaccine recommendations should be grounded in the best available science and recommendations should come from experts in vaccinology and the medical community.

Depend on Vaccine Safety Systems
Individuals should continue to have the support of and confidence in dedicated programs for addressing vaccine injuries as well as active surveillance systems to monitor for adverse events after vaccines are approved.

Healthy Environments
Healthcare providers, especially those in contact with older and immunocompromised Americans, should take precautions to prevent the spread of vaccine preventable disease.

Data
Individuals should have the ability to easily access their own vaccination records, records should be available for patients across public health and healthcare settings and should be secure and available in real time.

EPSTEIN
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The Vaccine Legal Landscape

Richard Hughes IV, JD MPH

May 2026

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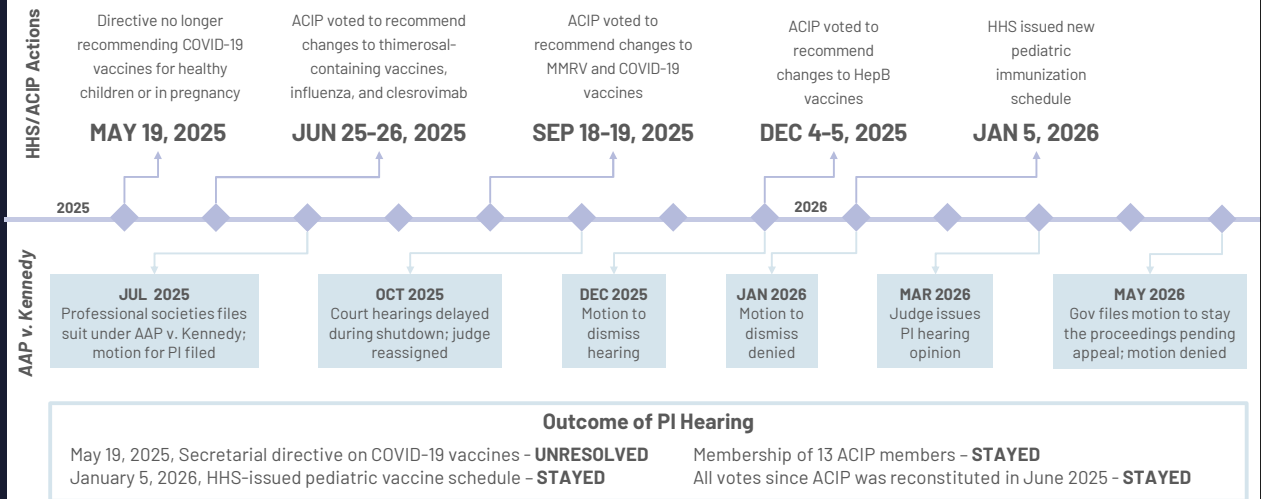
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Vaccine Litigation: Weighing the Consequences for Public Health

Four fronts of litigation are reshaping vaccine policy and the valance between liberty and the common good

 Federal Vaccine Processes and Policies	 Religious Exemptions	 Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP)
- AAP v. Kennedy (2026): court stayed ACIP changes and reinforced evidence-based processes - APA + FACA: require transparency, balance and reasoned decision-making - Kennedy v. Braidwood Mgmt. (2025): HHS control over recommendations expands - Loper Bright (2024): end of Chevron deference invites more challenges to agency action	- Miller v. McDonald (2025): remand suggests stronger free exercise scrutiny - Perry v. Marteney (2026): West Virginia's medical-only exemption likely constitutional - Guzman v. West Virginia Bd. of Ed. (2025): trial court ordered broad exemptions; appeal pending - Groff v. DeJoy (2023): stronger workplace religious accommodation claims	- Anti-vaccine advocates are trying to shift to shared-clinical decision-making (SCDM) recommendations to circumvent manufacturer liability protections - Converting a recommendation to SCDM does not automatically trigger its removal of the vaccine from the VICP - The Secretary may seek to undermine VICP by 1) removing vaccines from the Table to enable individuals to sue manufacturers directly, or 2) expanding the injuries included to increase claims
Best use of litigation: protect administrative integrity	Broad opt-outs could erode school and workplace vaccination requirements	Challenges to VICP could weaken program compensation and threaten the balance of liability protections

Timeline of Recent Policy Changes and AAP v. Kennedy Impact



AAP v. Kennedy will continue on a dual track: 1) in the First Circuit through the appeals process and 2) before Judge Murphy in the District of Massachusetts, as the appeal does not automatically halt the trial-level activity

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MAURA HEALEY (MA)



WES MOORE (MD)



JOSH STEIN (NC)



MIKIE SHERRILL (NJ)



KATHY HOCHUL (NY)



TINA KOTEK (OR)



DAN MCKEE (RI)



BOB FERGUSON (WA)

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Governors

Representing every region of the U.S.
and 130+ million people



more than 1 in 3 people
nationwide

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What we do:

Governors Public Health Alliance (PHA) – a nonpartisan coalition of Governors protecting the health and well-being of their people – works together to:

- ✓ **Coordinate messaging** on public health threats
- ✓ **Collaborate** on technical and regulatory health matters
- ✓ **Explore data exchanges** with trusted partners
- ✓ **Liaise globally** to exchange critical public health information



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State Actions on Vaccinations

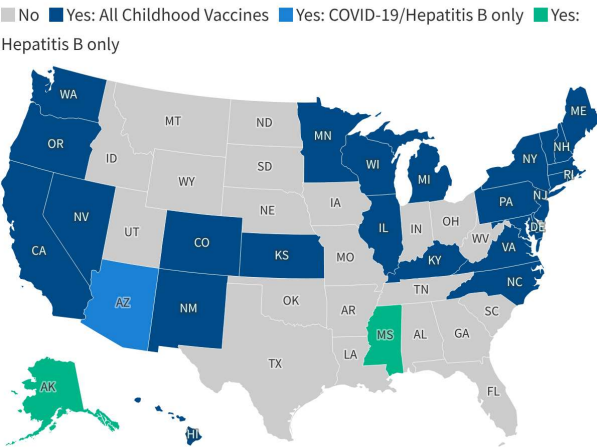
Alliances have been formed to coordinate efforts (ie: PHA, West Coast Health Alliance, Northeast Public Health Collaborative).

States have announced that they are no longer following CDC recommendations as their benchmark for some or all childhood vaccines.

States are relying on professional societies, older versions of the vaccine schedule, and allowing their health authorities to determine recommendations based on the latest science and evidence.

This is happening in both red and blue states.

State Reliance on Sources Other Than CDC/ACIP for Childhood Vaccine Recommendations, as of March 10, 2026



Source: KFF analysis of state legislative and executive activity.

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What is next?

PASSING LEGISLATION & ENSURING ACCESS: Passing legislation, stabilizing evidence-based vaccine policies, and ensuring access to vaccines in the face of changing federal guidance.

COMMUNICATIONS: Addressing vaccine hesitancy through trusted messengers and planning communications for respiratory season.

COORDINATION: Coordinating with societies, non-profits, alliances, and elected officials on best practices, policy for the future, and communications.

GOVERNORS' RACES: Preparing for potential transitions as 39 governors are up for re-election this November, meaning the sphere of state government will be changing.



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Erin Abramsohn, DrPH
Executive Director, IDPN
Summit, May 2026



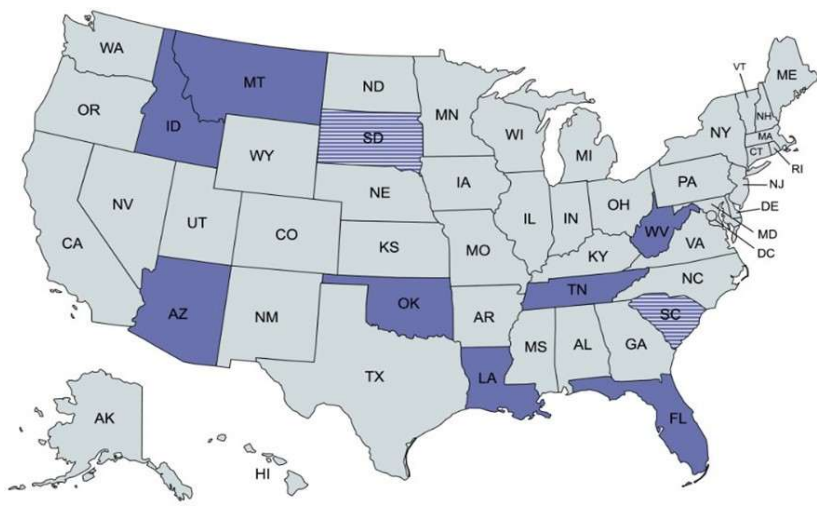


IDPN STRATEGY

IDPN provides legislative strategy and campaign management for state-based pro-vaccine advocacy efforts

We coordinate state-based grassroots advocacy activities, government relations work, and targeted, strategic communications efforts in states facing the most severe anti-vaccine challenges.

**IDPN States: AZ, FL, ID, LA, MT,
OK, SC, SD, TN, WV**



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RESULTS

- 35+ anti-vaccine bills defeated in 2026 (so far)
- 100+ bills defeated (since 2021)



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Even if it feels
like we’re losing
ground at the
national level,

We’re WINNING
in the states



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Persuadable Republicans have not
abandoned vaccines

They have abandoned the coercive,
politicized approach that surrounded
COVID vaccines

How we frame our messages is
IMPORTANT

The path to reaching this audience runs
through local doctors and accessible
choice, not national mandates

POLLING & FOCUS GROUPS

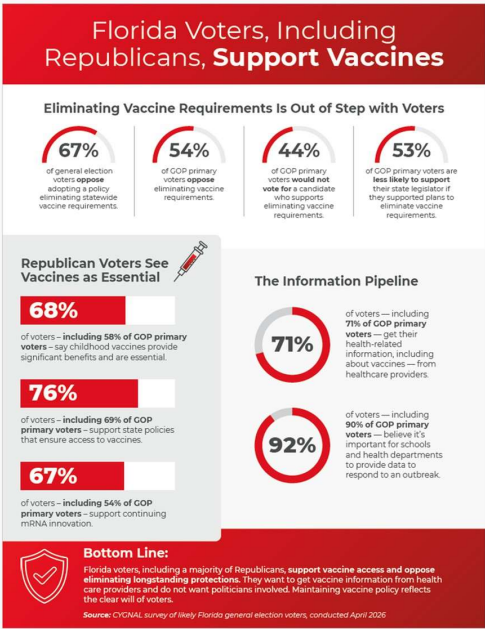
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MESSAGING:

Trying to remove longstanding protective vaccine policies is not a winning issue, it's a political liability

Vaccine decisions should be guided by doctors, not politicians

Vaccines should be easy to access and covered by insurance for people who want them



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CONNECT WITH US!

- Learn more about IDPN:
<https://diseasepreventionnetwork.org/>
- Join our National Table and sign up to receive our monthly [IDPN Bulletin](#)
- Sign on to our shared statement of values: [Council of Supporters](#)
- We can connect you with our State Tables to access information, strategy, and advocacy and communication opportunities
- We provide resources that you can use and customize, including talking points, fact sheets, and op-ed templates

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Audience Q&A

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