American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Comments to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices: Docket No. CDC-2025-0454

September 12, 2025

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is pleased to provide comments to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) in advance of the September 18-19th, 2025 meeting. ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supporting evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN is making cancer a top priority for public officials and candidates at the federal, state, and local levels, and empowering advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy. Our comments focus on the importance of supporting science-based policies that improve access to vaccines that prevent and treat cancer as well as protect people living with cancer.

Prevention: Preventing Viruses that Cause Cancer

Vaccines are essential for helping to prevent some cancers that are caused by viruses, such as the human papillomavirus virus (HPV), which causes almost all cervical cancers and the hepatitis B virus (HBV) which increases the risk of liver cancer. HPV and HBV vaccination is cancer prevention.

The HPV vaccine can prevent six types of cancer – anal, cervical, penile, throat, vaginal and vulva cancer. Among vaccinated women, the percentage of cervical precancers caused by the HPV types most often linked to cervical cancer has dropped by 40 percent.[i] HPV immunization has also been shown to lower the risk of developing head and neck cancer among men and boys.[ii]

Over a decade of research and safety monitoring have shown that the HPV vaccine is both safe and effective. People who have chronic (long-term) infections with HBV are at higher risk of liver cancer. The HBV vaccine helps prevent HBV infection and may lower some people's risk of getting liver cancer.[iii]

Treatment: Advances in Cancer Treatment

Cancer vaccine treatments can also improve the lives of cancer patients. Therapeutic cancer vaccines can be used to treat existing cancers by triggering the immune system to attack tumor cells. There has been great progress in vaccines that treat cancer, including vaccines used to treat advanced prostate cancer and advanced melanoma skin cancer. Other types of cancer vaccines have shown promise in clinical trials against a variety of cancer types. Cancer treatment vaccines trigger the immune system to mount an attack against cancer cells in the body. Instead of preventing disease, they are meant to treat a disease that already exists. ACS CAN supports access to vaccines licensed, approved, or authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or available through an approved FDA investigational new drug application, and opposes restrictions on access to these vaccines.

Protecting People with Cancer

Community immunity plays an important role in reducing risks to cancer patients and their families. Cancer patients often have a weakened immune system, and some patients may be unable to be vaccinated, or a vaccine may be less effective. This can be particularly true for patients with blood cancers (such as leukemia or lymphoma) as well as patients getting chemotherapy, long courses of corticosteroids, certain types of immunotherapies, or a stem cell or bone marrow transplant.

Increased community immunity helps protect cancer patients where they live, learn and work. Vaccination policies that bolster community immunity can protect cancer patients from viruses, allowing them to go to health care appointments and do other public activities safely.

Conclusion

ACS CAN supports fact-based vaccine policies that fight cancer through increased access and uptake of vaccines that **prevent** viruses that lead to cancer, **treat** cancer by boosting the immune system, and **protect** cancer patients and their families by maximizing community immunity. ACS CAN looks forward to the important work of ACIP. For additional information, please contact Katie McMahon, Policy Principal, ACS CAN at Katie.McMahon@cancer.org.

Thank you.

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[i] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Human Papillomavirus, Impact of the HPV Vaccine, updated July 9, 2024, accessed April 23, 2025.
[ii] DeKloe, J., Hanna, G. J., & others. (2024). *Effects of HPV vaccination on the development of HPV-related cancers.* Journal of Clinical Oncology, 42(Suppl. 16), Abstract 10507.
[iii] Chang, M. H. (2011). Hepatitis B virus and cancer prevention. *Recent Results in Cancer Research, 188*, 75–84. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-10858-7_6