Vaccine Policy Recommendations At-a-Glance

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Why Vaccines Matter

Vaccines are one of the most effective and rigorously evaluated public health interventions in history. Over the past 50 years, global vaccination efforts have saved more than 150 million lives, prevented millions of hospitalizations, and yielded trillions of dollars in economic and societal benefits.[1] In the U.S. alone, routine childhood vaccination for the 1994-2023 birth cohort will prevent an estimated 1.1 million deaths and save $540 billion in direct medical costs.[2]

The power of vaccines extends far beyond infectious diseases. Vaccines prevent some forms of cancer (like liver and cervical) and show promise in the treatment of many others, including pancreatic and breast cancer.[3,4] Emerging evidence suggests potential benefits in reducing the risk of dementia and in treating and/or preventing a wide range of conditions, including autoimmune diseases, cardiovascular disease, allergies, and even addiction.[5,6,7]

What's at Risk

Despite these achievements, the U.S. faces acute challenges that require near-term solutions:

- Declining vaccination rates
- Erosion of public trust in vaccines and science
- Recent changes of concern in federal vaccine policy
- Movement away from evidence-based policy decision making

AAI strongly recommends that Congress and relevant federal agencies, in close coordination with the scientific community, prioritize the following actions:

Ensure evidence-based vaccine policy and strengthen public trust in vaccines

1. Fortify the independence and transparency of federal vaccine advisory committees, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.
2. Ensure vaccine policy is rooted in evidence-based science. Any changes to federal vaccine policy should be publicly and transparently justified with sound data.
3. Invest in strengthening vaccine information and confidence. Federal and non-federal entities are essential to increasing vaccine confidence as public confusion and uncertainty about vaccines grows.

Address gaps in vaccine science knowledge

1. Ensure robust and sustained federal support for foundational immunology, vaccinology, and infectious disease research. Continued federal investment is essential to discovery, optimization of current vaccines, and preparing for future outbreaks.
2. Advance mechanistic understanding of human immune responses to vaccination. Dedicated funding should be set-aside for research that aims to provide comprehensive insights into vaccine efficacy, safety, durability, and variability across individuals, populations, and stages of life, including predictors of protective and adverse responses.
3. Invest in next-generation vaccine development. New and emerging vaccines platforms hold promise to enhance the magnitude of response to, safety of, and durability of protection by vaccines.

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