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Vaccine Integrity Project and American Medical Association Launch Vaccine Evidence Review Process for 2026–27 Respiratory Virus Season

Effort will focus on influenza, COVID-19, and RSV immunizations and convene medical societies to develop evidence-based guidance

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — The Vaccine Integrity Project, in collaboration with the American Medical Association (AMA), today announced the kickoff of a structured, evidence-based review process to assess vaccine safety and effectiveness for the 2026–27 respiratory virus season. The review will focus on immunizations for influenza, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Building on the thorough [evidence review completed for the 2025–26 season](#), this new effort will establish a structured and durable process for evaluating the science underpinning respiratory virus immunization. The Vaccine Integrity Project, based at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP), and the AMA will convene leading medical professional societies as well as public health and health care organizations to help define a comprehensive set of policy questions. The goal of this work is to ensure a deliberative, evidence-driven approach to produce the data necessary to understand the risks and benefits of vaccine policy decisions for all populations—the approach traditionally used by the federal government.

“Respiratory viruses hospitalize and kill tens of thousands of Americans every year, and vaccine decisions must be guided by facts, not politics or ideology,” said CIDRAP Director Michael Osterholm, PhD, MPH. “Our goal is to build on our efforts to restore peace of mind for clinicians and patients by ensuring that experts are continuously evaluating vaccine safety and effectiveness using transparent, evidence-based methods.”

For decades, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) served as the engine of evidence-based vaccine policy in the United States. That system has now effectively collapsed. This new initiative will follow a rigorous process that includes:

- Structured discussions to define key policy questions
- Ongoing expert panels and monthly scientific meetings
- Systematic literature reviews and evidence summaries
- Comparative analyses across vaccines and populations
- Data transparency, including a public protocol, allowing the results to be independently verified

“It is our duty as health care professionals to work across medicine, science and public health to make sure the U.S. has a transparent, evidence-based process by which vaccine recommendations are made,” said AMA Trustee Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, MD. “Together, we

are committed to ensuring the American public has clear, evidence-based guidance that inspires confidence when making important vaccination decisions.”

To begin, the Vaccine Integrity Project and the AMA will meet with medical societies to determine important policy questions that this process will seek to answer. For example, are there any newly published data to inform the need for additional doses of an RSV vaccine? From there, the Vaccine Integrity Project will begin to assemble comprehensive scientific evidence briefs for influenza, COVID-19, and RSV by reviewing, extracting and synthesizing the newest published data on virology, epidemiology, vaccine effectiveness, and vaccine safety and will update medical societies about its findings.

These briefs will be provided to participating medical societies—whose physician members are on the front lines of patient care—to develop and disseminate immunization guidance for their respective populations. As appropriate, societies will supplement the shared evidence base with population-specific data, such as guidance for pregnant women, children, older adults, immunocompromised individuals, and otherwise healthy adults.

Participants in the evidence review process will disclose relevant conflicts of interest, and the Vaccine Integrity Project’s review work will be independently funded through philanthropy. The ultimate goal is to ensure that clinicians have access to credible, up-to-date evidence to inform patient care that is backed by the experts of our professional societies—even as the broader vaccine policy infrastructure in the United States remains under strain.

The need for sustained, evidence-based guidance is underscored by the measurable impact of vaccination. According to CDC estimates, influenza vaccination alone prevented nearly 10 million illnesses, about 120,000 hospitalizations, and nearly 8,000 deaths during the 2023–24 season. Yet almost 300 children died from influenza last flu season, the vast majority of whom were unvaccinated. COVID-19 vaccination continues to significantly reduce hospitalization risk among older adults and other high-risk populations, and RSV immunization continues to yield strong protective results for older adults and the youngest Americans.

Launched in April 2025, the Vaccine Integrity Project was created to ensure that vaccine use in the United States remains grounded in the best available evidence and focused on protecting public health. In addition to its 2025-26 evidence review for flu, COVID and RSV, the Project recently completed an evidence review of the birth dose of the [hepatitis B vaccine](#) and is in the process of reviewing data related to HPV vaccination.

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