

WFPHA Statement on the Overhaul of the U.S. Childhood Vaccine Schedule

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Children's Health Is Not a Policy Experiment

The World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) is deeply concerned by the announced overhaul of the United States childhood vaccine schedule. Childhood immunisation schedules represent one of the most rigorously tested and continuously monitored public health interventions in history. Built on decades of scientific evidence and comprehensive safety surveillance, they have protected millions of children and saved countless lives. Altering them without clear, transparent, and evidence-based justification puts child health and public trust at serious risk.

Vaccines protect not only individuals but entire communities. Disrupting established schedules can lead to delayed or missed vaccinations, renewed outbreaks of preventable diseases, and avoidable hospitalisations and deaths. History demonstrates unequivocally that even modest declines in vaccine coverage can lead to rapid, severe consequences for children.

The Equity Crisis

The equity implications demand urgent attention. Any destabilisation of the U.S. childhood vaccine schedule will not affect all children equally. Those from low-income families, racial and ethnic minority communities, rural areas, and those with limited healthcare access will bear the most significant burden. Confusion, conflicting messages, and eroded confidence will deepen existing health inequities and create new barriers to protection for those already facing disadvantage.

Professor Raman Bedi, President-elect of the WFPHA and Emeritus Professor at King's College London, who has devoted his career to addressing health inequities, states: "I am profoundly concerned that these changes will disproportionately and negatively impact the marginalised and vulnerable. When public health policy wavers, it is always those with the least who suffer the most. We cannot allow vaccine policy to become another mechanism for widening health disparities."

Global Implications

Trust remains central to vaccine success, in a climate already challenged by misinformation and hesitancy. Policy changes that appear politicised or inadequately grounded in science risk fundamentally undermining confidence in vaccine safety. Once trust is weakened, restoration is painfully difficult—and children pay the price.

U.S. immunisation policy carries a profound global influence. Domestic decisions shape international debates, affect vaccine confidence worldwide, and impact uptake far beyond U.S. borders. At this critical juncture for global immunisation, actions that risk politicising vaccines threaten hard-won progress everywhere.

As Professor Michael Moore, Chair of the WFPpha International Immunisation Policy Taskforce, emphasises: "Undermining proven vaccine schedules is not innovation—it is gambling with children's lives, eroding trust in vaccine safety, and deepening health inequities."

Call to Action

WFPpha urges U.S. decision-makers to uphold scientific integrity, protect trust in vaccines, and keep children's health and equity at the centre of immunisation policy. The consequences of failure will be measured in preventable disease, shattered confidence, and lives needlessly put at risk—consequences that will fall most heavily on those already facing the most significant barriers to health.



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