

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 3, 2025

The Honorable James O'Neill  
Acting Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C., 20201

Dear Director O'Neill:

We are writing to you in advance of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) December 2025 meeting to strongly urge you to maintain the highly effective recommendation that all babies receive the hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth.

We were pleased that the committee delayed any vote to change the hepatitis B vaccine in September, but are very concerned that the Committee may vote to remove this longstanding recommendation this month as part of its larger focus on altering childhood vaccinations. There is no data to support delaying the first immunization to one-month, four years, or 12 years of age. Globally, the need for early protection is the norm, with 116 countries recommending the universal birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine.<sup>1</sup> Since the implementation of the birth dose recommendation in 1991, there has been an astonishing 99% reduction in childhood hepatitis B infections. In the last 30 years, this vaccine schedule is estimated to have saved over 90 thousand lives, prevented 6 million infections, and nearly 1 million hospitalizations. Further, a model by the Center for Disease Analysis Foundation found that removing the universal birth dose in favor of later vaccination initiation would result in 99,000 new hepatitis B infections across the United States over the next 30 years.<sup>2</sup>

Timing of the administration of the vaccine is critical, as those exposed to the virus as a newborn or infant have a 90% chance of developing chronic hepatitis B, placing them at significant risk for liver cancer in their lifetime. Early vaccination is critical, because hepatitis B virus is 100 times more infectious than HIV, and exposure can happen at birth, or via caregivers, grandparents, other family members, or children who may not know they are infected.<sup>3</sup> Even a microscopic amount of infected blood or bodily fluids can result in a lifelong infection, and the virus can live on surfaces for seven days. Per the American Academy of Pediatrics, babies infected with hepatitis B within the first year of life have a 90% chance of developing chronic hepatitis B, and one in four of those with chronic hepatitis B will die from the disease.<sup>4</sup> As hepatitis B is one of the world's leading causes of liver cancer, preventing infection during early childhood, when children are most vulnerable, is critical.

As mothers, fathers, and Members of Congress, we share your goal of reducing and eliminating childhood and lifelong illnesses. To protect children from hepatitis B, we strongly urge you to maintain the existing ACIP recommendation in support of the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine.

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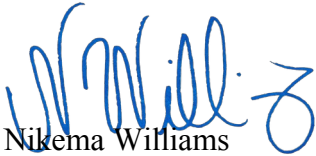
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/acip/downloads/slides-2025-09-18-19/hep-b-birth-dose-briefing-508.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Center for Disease Analysis Foundation. PRoGReSs Model. HBV Transmission and Disease Burden: The Impact of Changing Vaccination Schedules - U.S. Lafayette, CO: CDA Foundation, 2025. <https://www.hepb.org/resources-and-support/hep-b-birth-dose-media-toolkit/>; <https://www.hepb.org/resources-and-support/hep-b-birth-dose-media-toolkit/>

<sup>3</sup> Sabeena, S., & Ravishankar, N. (2022). Horizontal Modes of Transmission of Hepatitis B Virus (HBV): A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. Iranian journal of public health, 51(10), 2181–2193. <https://doi.org/10.18502/ijph.v51i10.10977>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/fact-checked/fact-checked-hepatitis-b-vaccine-given-to-newborns-reduces-risk-of-chronic-infection/?srsltid=AfmBOorh-hpO3sBE67E8vsr6MyLlW1sOgiyLhlBkkdS553y0556CQGW>

Sincerely,



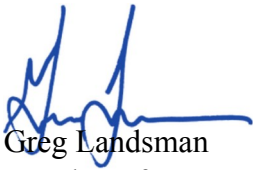
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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



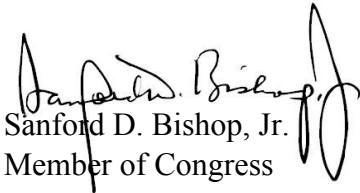
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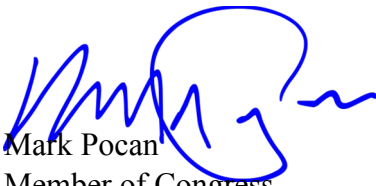
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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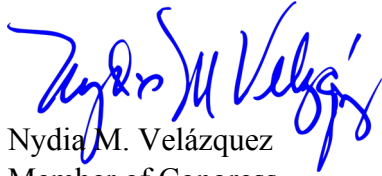
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Member of Congress



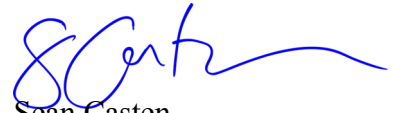
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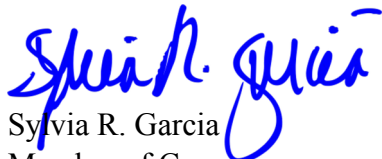
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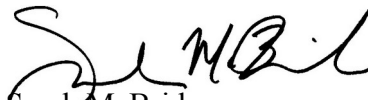
  
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CC:

ACIP Chair Kirk Milhoan

ACIP Vice Chair Robert Mallone