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**Contact:**

Jill Sudhoff-Guerin  
jill@maidstonepr.com  
802-917-5817



Vermont Chapter

## **VERMONT CLINICIANS REAFFIRM UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE**

*Joint Statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, Vermont Academy of Family Physicians, and Vermont Medical Society on Changes to the U.S. Childhood Immunization Schedule*

**Montpelier, VT** (Jan. 6, 2026) Vermont's physicians and other medical professionals reaffirm our unwavering commitment to evidence-based preventive care for children and adolescents in response to recent changes to the national childhood immunization schedule.

On January 5, 2026, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced revisions to the federal childhood vaccine recommendations. These changes reduce the number of vaccines routinely recommended for all children and shift several immunizations—including those for influenza, rotavirus, meningococcal disease, hepatitis A and B, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and others—to categories of “shared clinical decision-making” or recommendations limited to specific high-risk populations.

For decades, clear, nationally consistent immunization recommendations have been a cornerstone of pediatric public health. Routine childhood vaccines have dramatically reduced illness, disability, and death from serious infectious diseases, preventing millions of cases of disease and tens of thousands of hospitalizations among U.S. children. These recommendations support high vaccination coverage, equitable access, and public confidence in preventive care.

The benefits of routine immunization are well established across the childhood vaccination schedule. Influenza vaccination reduces hospitalizations and deaths each year. Rotavirus vaccination has sharply reduced severe diarrheal illness in infants. Hepatitis A and B vaccines have led to sustained declines in liver disease and community transmission. Meningococcal vaccination protects against rare but life-threatening invasive infections. RSV immunization provides significant protection against serious disease in infants with dramatic decreases in hospitalizations.

In Vermont, where rural geography, limited pediatric inpatient capacity, and seasonal respiratory surges strain the health care system, preventing vaccine-preventable disease has an outsized impact on families, clinicians, and communities. Moving away from clear, routine immunization guidance risks increasing preventable illness, avoidable hospitalizations, and health inequities.

**Our position is clear:**

- **Routine, evidence-based immunization recommendations are essential** to protecting the health of children and communities. On-time vaccination safeguards individual children and reduces the spread of contagious diseases.
- **National pediatric and family medicine organizations**, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians, continue to support immunization schedules grounded in the best available scientific evidence and clinical data. The AAP's current recommendations affirm the importance of routine childhood immunizations as being in the best interest of child health.
- **The safety and effectiveness of recommended childhood vaccines are well established**, supported by decades of rigorous research, ongoing safety monitoring, and real-world outcomes.
- **We support strong vaccine coverage policies, clear communication, and equitable access** for all families, particularly those at increased risk for severe disease. Legislation such as H.545 would allow Vermont to maintain evidence-based vaccine recommendations and coverage, and our organizations support its passage.

We encourage families with questions about vaccines - whether regarding routine childhood immunizations or age-specific recommendations - to speak with their primary care clinician. The Vermont Department of Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics continue to provide reliable and accurate online resources for families. Immunization decisions should be grounded in science, clinical judgment, and the shared goal of protecting the health and well-being of Vermont's children and communities.

Breena Holmes, MD, President  
American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter

Michelle Dorwart, MD, President  
Vermont Academy of Family Physicians

Naiim Ali, MD, President  
Vermont Medical Society

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**About the Vermont Medical Society:** The Vermont Medical Society is the leading voice of physicians in the state and is dedicated to optimizing the health of all Vermonters and the health care environment in which Vermont physicians and physician assistants practice medicine. The Society serves its 3,100 members through public policy advocacy on the state and federal levels, as well as by providing legal, administrative and educational support, producing a rich flow of news and information and offering member benefits that increase medical practice effectiveness and efficiency. For more information, visit [www.VTMD.org](http://www.VTMD.org).