



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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September 13, 2025

Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)
1600 Clifton Road NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

RE: Comments for the September 2025 Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (**Docket No. CDC-2025-0454**) / Recommendation of Hepatitis B Universal Birth Dose Vaccination

Members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP):

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) works to protect and improve the health of all people in Washington state. One important way the Department does this is promoting vaccination against infectious diseases for children and adults. DOH strongly urges the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to maintain the recommendation of universal hepatitis B birth dose vaccination in the United States.

The universal hepatitis B birth dose vaccination has been a stellar public health success. In the United States, it has been recommended for infants since 1991. Before the use of the universal birth dose vaccine in the United States, [an estimated 18,000 children annually were infected at birth or by the age of 10](#). Half of these infections were due to transmission from the infected mother to the baby. Some babies are born to mothers who are not tested during pregnancy or the test results are unknown. The universal hepatitis B birth dose protects babies born to infected mothers and has reduced the number of infections by 95%, with an estimate of [1000 babies identified annually in the United States](#). Thanks to prevention efforts, including universal birth dose vaccination, only three perinatal hepatitis B infections have been reported in Washington State in the last ten years. A change in the recommendation would hinder efforts to eliminate hepatitis B in Washington State and across the United States.

Early administration of the vaccine improves its effectiveness. Vaccination within 24 hours of birth, followed by 2 to 3 additional doses, protects almost all vaccinated children against the hepatitis B virus for life. Hepatitis B infection, can cause serious health complications, including liver cancer, making the hepatitis B vaccine the first vaccine that can prevent a form of cancer. Approximately 90% of infants who are exposed to hepatitis B will develop a chronic infection and up to 25% of people infected at birth will die prematurely of hepatitis B-related causes.

Since implementing the birth dose, the U.S. has [prevented an estimated 90,100 deaths from hepatitis B](#).

Since the introduction of the hepatitis B vaccine in 1986, the vaccine has been administered over one billion times around the world. Research and surveillance conducted by CDC has shown that [the vaccine is thoroughly tested and well-tolerated in infants, children, and adults](#) and most side effects are mild, such as soreness at the injection site and low-grade fever. The vaccine is our best defense against hepatitis B.

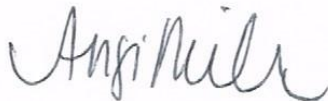
Most countries support the universal birth dose and follow the World Health Organization's (WHO) and the CDC's recommendations to administer the hepatitis B vaccine to all infants within the first 24 hours of birth. Some have suggested that the United States should adopt a policy of only vaccinating babies born to mothers with hepatitis B. This is done in some countries. The [countries with this policy have smaller populations](#), often 2 to 6 times smaller than that of the United States, and universal healthcare systems that make screening, testing, and linkage to care for hepatitis B much more practicable. Health care systems in the United States currently struggle to identify those living with the disease. This makes diagnosis and treatment challenging and much more expensive than disease prevention. The United States lacks the public health infrastructure to ensure that all at-risk babies receive the birth dose in a timely manner, making universal vaccination the safest and most [cost-effective](#) approach.

Every family has the right to make informed decisions for their children. However, those decisions must be guided by reliable, rigorous, peer-reviewed, and tested recommendations using the scientific method. Eliminating the universal birth dose recommendation would create barriers and confusion, limiting access to the vaccine and undermining parents' ability to choose to protect their babies.

DOH strongly supports maintaining the current hepatitis B birth dose vaccine policy, which acts as a safety net, protecting babies and saving lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Angi Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Angi" and last name "Miller" clearly distinguishable.

Angi Miller
Acting Assistant Secretary
Disease Control and Health Statistics
Washington State Department of Health