



## **AWHP Comments to CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices**

**October 2024**

**Docket No. CDC-2024-0072**

As an organization dedicated to supporting women's health and wellbeing across the lifespan, the Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention (AWHP) advances efforts that promote equitable access to and uptake of vaccines. As such, AWHP strongly supports clear and comprehensive vaccine recommendations.

As part of the HPV Coalition, AWHP supports lowering the age recommendation for HPV vaccination to 9. Given the effectiveness of HPV vaccines in preventing cancers caused by HPV, including cervical cancer, robust uptake of the vaccine is critical for public health. However, uptake remains suboptimal. Initiating the HPV vaccine series at age 9 has proven to be an effective approach to addressing these rates in the U.S., with evidence demonstrating the impact on vaccination uptake. This change would also align ACIP's age recommendation with other leading groups, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Cancer Society. Having a clear, consistent recommendation would reduce patient and provider confusion and ultimately reduce preventable deaths from HPV-related cancers.

Additionally, as the ACIP has previously discussed a timeline for revisiting the adolescent meningococcal schedule, AWHP strongly encourages the Committee to expedite its reassessment of the schedule and prioritize a timely vote.

AWHP supports a clear and comprehensive meningococcal vaccine schedule for adolescents and young adults and encourages the ACIP to make recommendations that further this goal by updating guidance related to pentavalent meningitis vaccines that promise to streamline implementation. We welcome a simplified vaccine process for this serious, yet preventable disease and encourage broad, equitable meningococcal vaccination. Given the delay of the Meningococcal Working Group's assessment, the ACIP can make a tangible difference in meningitis prevention by advancing a clear and easy to understand recommendation that protects young adults against all five strains of meningococcal bacteria most likely to cause meningococcal meningitis. This is a unique and rare opportunity to revise the adolescent meningococcal vaccine schedule to improve broader, equitable access to new prevention options, and stakeholders that are focused on preventing this terrible disease are waiting for this critical vote to take place.