



September 21, 2023

HealthyWomen is pleased to have this opportunity to provide written comments to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for its meeting September 22, 2023 on the RSVpreF Vaccine for pregnant individuals and infants.

HealthyWomen is an advocacy organization dedicated to educating women so they can make informed health decisions and advocate for themselves and prioritize their health and wellness. As women are often the caretakers and healthcare decision makers for the younger and older generations in the family, HealthyWomen is a trusted resource for credible, up-to-date information relevant to their mental and physical well-being as well as that of their families. We believe a critical aspect of our work is preventative care.

This includes information around vaccines, which are a critical preventative tool to protect against serious disease across the lifespan. The intergenerational nature of our society naturally creates an environment where viruses can spread among those most vulnerable, from the youngest to the oldest. As demonstrated by last year's uptick in RSV cases, our country was once again reminded of how those types of respiratory viruses can quickly spread across generations. We saw RSV leave infants and older adults vulnerable to serious illness.

According to the [CDC](#), an estimated 58,000 to 80,000 children under five years old are hospitalized due to RSV infection annually in the US, and infants six months and younger are at a greater risk of severe illness. With the availability of the new maternal RSV vaccine, it is critical to ensure the value of these vaccines is accurately represented within all communities, and that we prioritize equitable and broad access to them. This is especially important given that we know maternal vaccination rates remain dangerously low.

The latest data from the [CDC](#) showed that vaccination rates of both flu and Tdap vaccines among pregnant women decreased from about 30% in 2020 to 2021 season to just over 22% in the 2021-2022 season. These maternal vaccines are incredibly valuable in ensuring the health of both the mother and the baby, but only if everyone does their part to educate on their value and ensure all communities have equal access to them. We appreciate ACIP's commitment in ensuring that safe, effective, and innovative new vaccines like the maternal RSV vaccine are made available to all of those who would benefit from them.

With so many looming threats to our respiratory health, including COVID, influenza, pneumonia, and RSV facing us this fall, we are hopeful that all pregnant women will have access to this critical protection ahead of the fall and winter season. As an organization, HealthyWomen is

prepared to ensure women are informed about the value and availability of these preventive tools so that the most vulnerable are truly protected from this virus.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions with respect to this comment please feel free to contact me at [martha@healthywomen.org](mailto:martha@healthywomen.org)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha R. Nolan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Martha" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Nolan".

Martha Roberts Nolan  
Senior Policy Advisor  
HealthyWomen