CDC spiraled into chaos this week. Here’s where things stand.

On Thursday, the Post reported that the White House had already named a replacement. Jim O’Neill, currently the deputy secretary of HHS, is to be the interim leader of the CDC. O’Neill was previously a Silicon Valley investor and entrepreneur who became a close ally of Peter Thiel. He also worked as a federal official in the George W. Bush administration. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he was a frequent critic of the CDC, but at his Senate confirmation hearing in May, he called himself “very strongly pro-vaccine.”

Kennedy, meanwhile, went on Fox News’ *Fox and Friends* program Thursday and said the CDC is “in trouble” and that “we’re fixing it. And it may be that some people should not be working there anymore.”

Kennedy’s ACIP is now scheduled to meet September 18–19 to discuss COVID-19 shots, among other vaccines.

Response at the CDC

Soon after news broke of Monarez’s removal, three high-ranking CDC officials resigned together: Daniel Jernigan, director of the National Center for Emerging Zoonotic Infectious Diseases; Debra Houry, chief medical officer; and Demetre Daskalakis, director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

Their resignation letters spoke to the dangers of Kennedy’s anti-vaccine, anti-science agenda.

“For the good of the nation and the world, the science at CDC should never be censored or subject to political pauses or interpretations,” Houry wrote in her resignation letter. “Vaccines save lives—this is an indisputable, well-established, scientific fact. … It is, of course, important to question, analyze, and review research and surveillance, but this must be done by experts with the right skills and experience, without bias, and considering the full weight of scientific evidence. Recently, the overstating of risks and the rise of misinformation have cost lives, as demonstrated by the highest number of US measles cases in 30 years and the violent attack on our agency.”

In his resignation letter, Daskalakis slammed Kennedy for his lack of transparency, communication, and interest in evidence-based policy. He accused the anti-vaccine advocate of using the CDC as “a tool to generate policies and materials that do not reflect scientific reality and are designed to hurt rather than to improve the public’s health.” He also blasted ACIP’s COVID work group members as having “dubious intent and more dubious scientific rigor.”

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