



UMB News

Dr. Wilbur Chen Selected For National Immunization Panel

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Wilbur H. Chen, MD, MS, FIDSA, FACP, professor of medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM), has been named a new voting member of the federal government's [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#), the prestigious board of experts that makes recommendations on the safe use of vaccines for Americans. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services selected Chen for the 15-member advisory committee based on his expertise and national leadership in vaccinology, infectious diseases, public health, and preventive medicine. He will remain in his current role at UMSOM while he serves in his four-year term, which began last month.

An internist and infectious disease physician-scientist with expertise in vaccinology, Chen has been instrumental in setting important policies to help the state of Maryland manage the COVID-19 pandemic during the past year. Last March, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan appointed Chen, along with **David Marcozzi, MD**, professor and associate chair of population health, UMSOM Department of Emergency Medicine, and University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) COVID-19 incident commander, to be members of the state's [Coronavirus Response Team](#). This special panel has been advising the governor and top administration officials on important health and emergency management decisions relating to management of the pandemic and vaccine distribution.



“Dr. Chen is a top national leader in public health issues and vaccine research, who is equally adept in the clinical world of treating and preventing infectious diseases, and in

(l-r) Drs. Chen, Marcozzi, Reece, and Neuzil

the research
and
development of
innovative new

vaccines,” said **E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA**, executive vice president for medical affairs, University of Maryland, Baltimore, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor, and UMSOM dean. “I can think of no one more fitting to serve on this important committee which helps set national vaccine policy.”

In addition to his faculty appointment at UMSOM, Chen is chief of the Adult Clinical Studies Section within the [Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health](#) (CVD) and director of the institution’s [Travel Medicine Practice](#). His research has been devoted to developing vaccines for enteric pathogens, infectious diseases chiefly of resource-poor and economically disadvantaged countries and populations. He also has worked to develop improved vaccines for the elderly, a rapidly growing segment of the global population, which is susceptible to many infections and a special population that generally responds poorly to vaccination.

“Dr. Chen will be an incredible asset to this important committee, bringing his gifted skills as a vaccine researcher, public health expert, and clinician,” said **Kathleen Neuzil, MD, MPH, FIDSA**, the Myron M. Levine, MD Distinguished Professor in Vaccinology and director of CVD. “I have no doubt that the passion, intellect, and energy that he brings to all of his work will enable him to excel in this new role.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sets the U.S. adult and childhood immunization schedules based on recommendations from ACIP. Before recommending any vaccine, ACIP considers many factors, including the safety, effectiveness, and effect on health equity of each vaccine. The committee is currently holding numerous emergency meetings to address COVID-19 vaccines. Under normal circumstances, there are three scheduled public full-committee meetings per year that vote on the recommendations for all U.S.-approved vaccines. Meanwhile, ACIP also conducts biweekly vaccine-specific workgroup meetings. These are held to review and assess the evidence for immunizations, which determine the proposed recommendations for the ACIP.

“I am incredibly honored to serve in this capacity and grateful for this opportunity to take on this vital public health role during one of the most challenging public health crises of the previous century,” said Chen.

Chen is an active investigator for two funded National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)-supported vaccine networks housed at CVD — a [Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Unit](#) (VTEU) and a Collaborative Influenza Vaccine Innovation Center (CIVICs) Clinic Core. He was the principal investigator of the NIAID-supported Food and Waterborne Diseases Integrated Research Network Clinical Research Unit. He has been a principal investigator on vaccine trials for influenza viruses, bioterror agents, and intestinal microbes including typhoid, cholera, and life-threatening strains of *E. coli*. He has been at UMSOM for nearly two decades and did his residency in internal medicine at the Johns Hopkins University Bayview Medical Center. He received his medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine and his bachelor’s degree from Boston University.

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