
MD Anderson and nation's top cancer centers endorse goal of eliminating HPV-related cancers

Joint statement encourages parents, young adults and physicians to take advantage of vaccination to prevent future HPV-related cancers

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Recognizing that vaccination rates for the human papillomavirus (HPV) remain low across the U.S., particularly in Texas, [The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center](#) again has joined with the 69 other [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#)-designated cancer centers in issuing a [joint statement](#) to call for increased HPV vaccination and evidence-based screening, with the goal of eliminating cancers caused by the virus.

This is the third national call to action from NCI-designated cancer centers, with the first statement published in 2016. All 70 cancer centers, representing the nation's leaders in cancer care and research, perceive low vaccination rates as a public health threat and call upon physicians, parents and young adults to take advantage of this opportunity to prevent several types of cancer in men and women.

For the first time, the statement also is endorsed by American Cancer Society, the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Society for Clinical Oncology, the Prevent Cancer Foundation, the American Society for Preventive Oncology and the Association of American Cancer Institutes.

"MD Anderson fully supports this joint effort to encourage evidence-based practices that can make a significant impact on the rising numbers of HPV-related cancers we diagnose and treat each year," said [Ernest Hawk, M.D.](#), vice president and division head, [Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences](#). "By increasing HPV vaccination and recommended cancer screening, we can make tremendous progress toward actually eliminating HPV-related cancers within our lifetimes, beginning with cervical cancer."

HPV, a group of more than 150 viruses, is responsible for the majority of cervical, anal, oropharyngeal (middle) throat and other genital cancers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that incidence rates of HPV-related cancers continue to increase, with an estimated 41,000 new cases diagnosed each year in the U.S.

Proven methods are available to screen for and treat cervical pre-cancers, and research suggests the HPV vaccine is safe and effective in preventing most cancers caused by HPV. Currently, the CDC recommends all children complete a two-dose vaccine series at age 11 or 12. The vaccine is recommended for young men up to age 21 and young women up to age 26, though adolescents older than 14 years will need to complete a three-dose vaccine series.

However, just 49.5 percent of girls and 37.5 percent of boys across the U.S. have completed the recommended vaccine series, according to a 2016 CDC report. In Texas, vaccination rates are even lower, with only 39.7 percent of girls and 26.5 percent of boys completing the appropriate vaccine series. These rates fall far short of the national goal of 80 percent, set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [Healthy People 2020 Initiative](#).

HPV experts from the nation's top cancer centers, along with partners from the NCI, CDC, and the ACS, are meeting June 7-8 in Salt Lake City to discuss a path forward to eliminating cancers caused by HPV, including ways to reduce barriers to vaccination as well as share education, training and intervention strategies to improve vaccination and screening rates.

"Too many people needlessly suffer from HPV-related pre-cancers and cancers each year, while we have safe and effective ways to prevent this," said [Lois Ramondetta, M.D.](#), professor of [Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine](#). "We encourage physicians to strongly and consistently advocate for vaccination and screening in their patients, and for parents to strongly advocate vaccination for their children, all to protect against future cancers caused by HPV."



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