



Leading Public Health Organizations Urge Healthcare Professionals to Prioritize Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination to Prevent Related Cancers

Bethesda, MD (August 26, 2014) - The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), with support from the nation's leading health organizations, have developed a call to action, "[HPV Vaccination as a Public Health Priority](#)," urging healthcare professionals to step up their efforts to get more US adolescents immunized against human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV vaccines currently protect against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical, vulvar, and vaginal cancers in females, penile cancers in males, and anal, throat, and other oral cancers in both sexes.

"HPV vaccines are safe and effective at preventing cancer," noted Joseph A. Bocchini, Jr., MD, NFID Program Chair. "To be most effective, the three-dose HPV vaccine series should begin at age 11 or 12 in both boys and girls." Adolescents who start the vaccine series at 11-12 years of age develop even higher protective antibody levels than those who are vaccinated later in their teens and have a better chance of receiving all three needed doses of vaccine.

The latest report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that more than six in 10 adolescent females and eight in 10 adolescent males have not been fully vaccinated against HPV, even though most are getting other recommended adolescent vaccines. Experts involved with the NFID and CSTE initiative stressed that healthcare professionals must recommend HPV vaccination as strongly as they do others. Three vaccines (HPV, meningococcal meningitis, and a combination vaccine against whooping cough, tetanus, and diphtheria) are recommended to be given during a single healthcare visit at 11 to 12 years of age. Annual influenza vaccination is also recommended for all individuals six months of age and older.

Call to Action Responds to a Public Health Priority

CDC and the President's Cancer Panel (PCP) have both made increasing HPV vaccination rates a public health priority to reduce cancer in the US population. Both were part of an expert roundtable convened by NFID to examine the issues. Roundtable presentations included a review of the factors contributing to vaccine hesitancy among healthcare professionals, as well as reasons parents may not vaccinate their children against HPV.

Noel T. Brewer, PhD, a professor of health behavior at the University of North Carolina who participated as a subject matter expert, noted "Most people agree to get HPV vaccine when their healthcare provider recommends it. The problem is that provider recommendations are often late, tentative, or altogether absent." According to Dr. Brewer, healthcare professionals need tools and strategies to help them give effective recommendations every time they see an eligible teen.

The roundtable concluded that healthcare professionals who have contact with adolescents and their parents/guardians need to embrace their role as healthcare leaders and recommend HPV vaccine with the same strength and conviction they use to recommend other adolescent vaccines. This includes educating themselves about HPV and HPV vaccines; informing and educating all practice staff to deliver positive, consistent messages about the dangers of HPV and the benefits of vaccination; and making vaccination procedures routine to minimize missed opportunities to vaccinate.

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New Online Resource Center Available

To support healthcare professionals and other office staff, NFID developed a new online resource center that includes information about the best ways to communicate with parents and adolescents about HPV and HPV vaccines. The HPV Resource Center, which includes content from a range of well-respected medical organizations, is available at <http://www.adolescentvaccination.org/hpv-resource-center>. Resources included on the site have all been reviewed to ensure they reflect the most recent vaccine recommendations and their messages are consistent with best practices for increasing HPV vaccination rates. The call to action “HPV Vaccination as a Public Health Priority” is also available in the resource center.

About the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1973 and dedicated to educating the public and healthcare professionals about the causes, treatment, and prevention of infectious diseases across the lifespan.

About the Council of State and Territorial Health Epidemiologists

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) is an organization of member states and territories representing applied public health epidemiologists. CSTE works to establish more effective relationships among states and other health agencies by providing technical assistance to partner organizations and to federal public health agencies.

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