

Vermont “Start at 9” Campaign to Prevent HPV Cancers



September 2023

VT organizations that have endorsed starting the HPV vaccine series at age 9:

- American Cancer Society
- Bi-State Primary Care Association
- Central Vermont Medical Center
- Dartmouth Cancer Center
- Northern New England Clinical & Translational Research Network
- People’s Health and Wellness Clinic
- Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
- UVM Cancer Center
- UVM Children’s Hospital
- UVM Health Network
- Vermonters Taking Action Against Cancer
- Vermont Dental Hygienists’ Association
- Vermont State Dental Society

Dear Vermont Health Care Provider,

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is estimated to cause about 37,300 new cases of cancer each year in the U.S.¹

We have an opportunity to eradicate HPV-associated cancers, yet too few people get the safe and effective vaccine. HPV can cause six different cancers, and the vaccine prevents most diagnoses of these cancers including 81% of invasive cervical and 66% of oropharyngeal cancers.² In Vermont, oral pharyngeal cancer is now the eighth most diagnosed cancer among males and females; every year about 108 Vermonters are diagnosed with oral pharyngeal cancer, and 23 die from it.³

A nine-valent HPV vaccine (HPV9) is available to protect against multiple strains, including the types that cause most cervical and other anogenital cancers, as well as some oropharyngeal cancers. **The HPV vaccine is approved for ages 9 years through 45 years for ALL GENDERS.** The American Cancer Society and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend vaccination beginning at age 9.

In Vermont, only 62% of adolescents aged 13-17 have completed the HPV vaccine.⁴ In rural communities, HPV vaccination rates are low, yet incidence and mortality rates of HPV-associated cancers are high.⁵ In Vermont, only 59% of rural youth have been vaccinated for HPV, compared to 67% of those living in urban areas.⁶

We must address this preventable public health issue. You can make a difference! **Provider recommendation for the HPV vaccine is considered the most effective determinant of vaccine uptake.**

The Vermont Department of Health Immunization Program provides vaccines at no cost to providers for all children and adults. The program is available to all enrolled providers through Vermont Child Vaccine Program (VCVP) and Vermont Adult Vaccine Program (VAVP).

Vermont is partnering with NH, CT, VA, WV, DC, PA, OH, MD, and DE, in a multi-state *Call to Action* to increase HPV vaccination through strong and consistent provider recommendations and the initiation of HPV vaccination starting at age 9. *HPV vaccination is cancer prevention!*

Please review the Provider Call to Action steps below as well as the resources and links at the end of the letter. Vermont’s Cancer Coalition, Vermonters Taking Action Against Cancer (VTAAC), is actively supporting this effort through its HPV Taskforce. For more information on how you can be involved in this initiative, please go to www.vtaac.org or email Coordinator@VTAAC.org.

Thank you for all that you do to improve the health of your patients. We appreciate your support for this important effort to prevent cancer by increasing HPV vaccination in Vermont.

Recommend starting HPV Vaccination at age 9!

PROVIDER CALL TO ACTION

- Set electronic health record notifications from ages 9 years through 45 years for all patients. Initiating the HPV vaccination at age 9 or 10 has been shown to increase vaccine completion at age 15 by 22 times.⁷
- Make a strong recommendation for HPV vaccines for all patients ages 9 years through 26 years. Data shows that your recommendation may improve vaccinations by up to 5 times.⁸
- For adults aged 27 years through 45 years, engage in shared decision-making to help patients determine the benefits of vaccination.
- Vaccination recommendations should be made in all healthcare settings including acute, non-acute, GYN, and dental locations.
- Encourage same-day vaccination in your facility.
- Review patients who have not completed their 2 or 3-dose series and proactively recall patients to your facility.
- Review vaccination status at every visit - not just well checks.
- Check adult patients through age 45 to ensure they have completed their HPV series.
- Identify an immunization champion at your facility.
- Implement standing orders for patients (tools can be found at <https://www.immunize.org/>).

PROVIDER RESOURCES

Information for Parents:

- [Development of Systems and Education for HPV Vaccination](#). DOSE HPV.
- [Prevent 6 Cancers with the HPV Vaccine](#). American Cancer Society.
- [HPV: For Parents](#). CDC

Success Stories:

- [Development of Systems and Education for HPV Vaccination](#). DOSE HPV.
- [Oral health and HPV vaccination](#). NC Oral Health Collaborative.

Background statistics

- [TeenVaxView, National Immunization Survey-Teens: 2019 Adolescent Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Coverage Dashboard](#). CDC.

Professional Education

- [National HPV Vaccination Roundtable](#). HPV YouTube channel.
- [You Are the Key](#). Updated 2022 Provider education.

REFERENCES

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6. [IMR \(April 2023\)](#)
7. Sauver JL, Rutten LJ, Ebbert JO, Jacobson DJ, McGree ME, Jacobson RM. Younger age at initiation of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination series is associated with higher rates of on-time completion. *Prev Med*. 2016 Aug;89:327–33. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2016.02.039. [\[Crossref\]](#), [\[PubMed\]](#), [\[Web of Science @\]](#), [\[Google Scholar\]](#)
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