

# The two-pronged approach: HPV, the ACS Toolkit, and School Clinics

BROOKSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Matthew Dugan



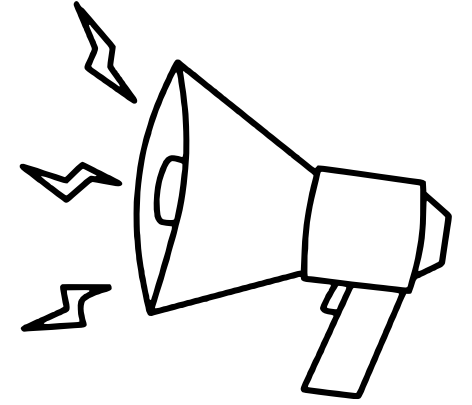
# Let's start with the problem:

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention NIS-Teen data shows that HPV vaccination has **remained flat over the past three years with only 57.3%** of 13-15 year olds up-to-date in 2023.”

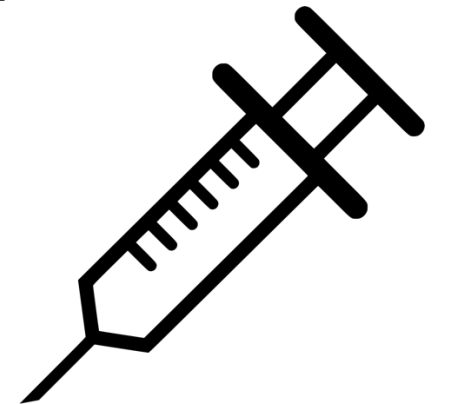
--American Cancer Society



There's strong evidence that, across scenarios, communication doesn't work without programming ...



... and programming doesn't work without communication



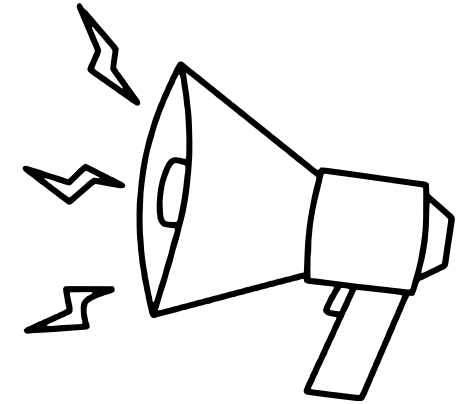
RESEARCH ARTICLE

# **School-Located Influenza Vaccination: Do Vaccine Clinics at School Raise Vaccination Rates?**

“Parent reminder/education combined with school-located influenza vaccination clinics raise vaccination rates, but parent reminder/education alone does not.”

(Szilagyi et al., 2019)

In other words, communication about the importance of the HPV vaccine alone doesn't move the needle much



... and the availability of the HPV vaccine in every doctor's office doesn't necessarily mean people will get it



If either were so, it would follow that more than **57.3% of children in the U.S.** would be fully vaccinated for HPV.

The Healthy People 2030 **goal is 80%**  
(as was the Healthy People 2020 one)

# In brief, the *communication barriers* between parents/caregivers and the HPV vaccine ...

- Information about the shot (e.g., as a cancer-preventing vaccine)
- Delaying
- Hesitation



\*the anti-vax voice is not a significant factor in Vermont

# In brief, the *program barriers* between parents/caregivers and HPV vaccination ...

- Price
- Time
- Accessibility







So, the ideal  
formula:

**Communication  
+ Program**  
(aka, the availability  
of the shot)

Efforts to  
address this:  
Exhibit A.



# HPV Vaccination Communications Toolkit:

A Resource for Health Plans

[cancer.org](https://cancer.org)

Released Nov. 2024

# From the toolkit ...

## DROP-IN LANGUAGE

Leverage all the ways you communicate with health systems, providers, and members to share messages about the importance, benefits, and urgency of HPV vaccination initiation at age 9. The following are short statements to incorporate into your written communications (newsletters, blog and social posts, member emails, etc.).

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGES AND PHONE SCRIPTS

Below are sample text messages and phone scripts that support the evidence-based reminder/recall intervention strategy to improve vaccination coverage. Share these with your provider and health system network for implementation in their clinics or organizations.

### SAMPLE LETTER TO FAMILIES

Download this sample letter for HPV vaccine reminder communications to families. This letter can be adjusted depending on if a child is due for their first dose or overdue for their next dose. Share this letter with families to help get children on track with HPV vaccination and to help parents and guardians learn why on-time vaccination against HPV is crucial for children.

### Voicemail Script

## Strong Recommendations Are Critical to HPV Vaccine Administration

- A clinician's recommendation is the number one reason parents choose to vaccinate their children. Additionally, the manner in which providers deliver vaccine recommendations can play a role in vaccine confidence and same-day vaccination. Use the [Announcement Approach](#) to pair presumptive announcements with techniques that meet the needs of parents who have questions or feel hesitant.
- Studies show that [presumptive statements](#)—which are brief statements that assume parents are ready to vaccinate—are more effective in improving HPV vaccination coverage than conversing with parents in an open-ended discussion.<sup>11,12,13</sup> Learn more on how to enhance vaccine conversations and increase acceptance through [CDC's Tips for Talking with Parents about Vaccines](#).

**Try this!** Send notifications to subscribers via text or your web portal when they have children who are turning 9. This can help alert parents to the upcoming HPV vaccine recommendation and empower them to take timely action to protect their child.

### Phone Scripts

One simple way to promote HPV vaccinations is through phone calls. Whether speaking to parents directly or while they are on hold, health care practices and their clinic staff can use the scripts below to remind parents about the importance of HPV vaccination and help ensure patients are up to date.

### Automated Phone Hold Script: Variety of HPV

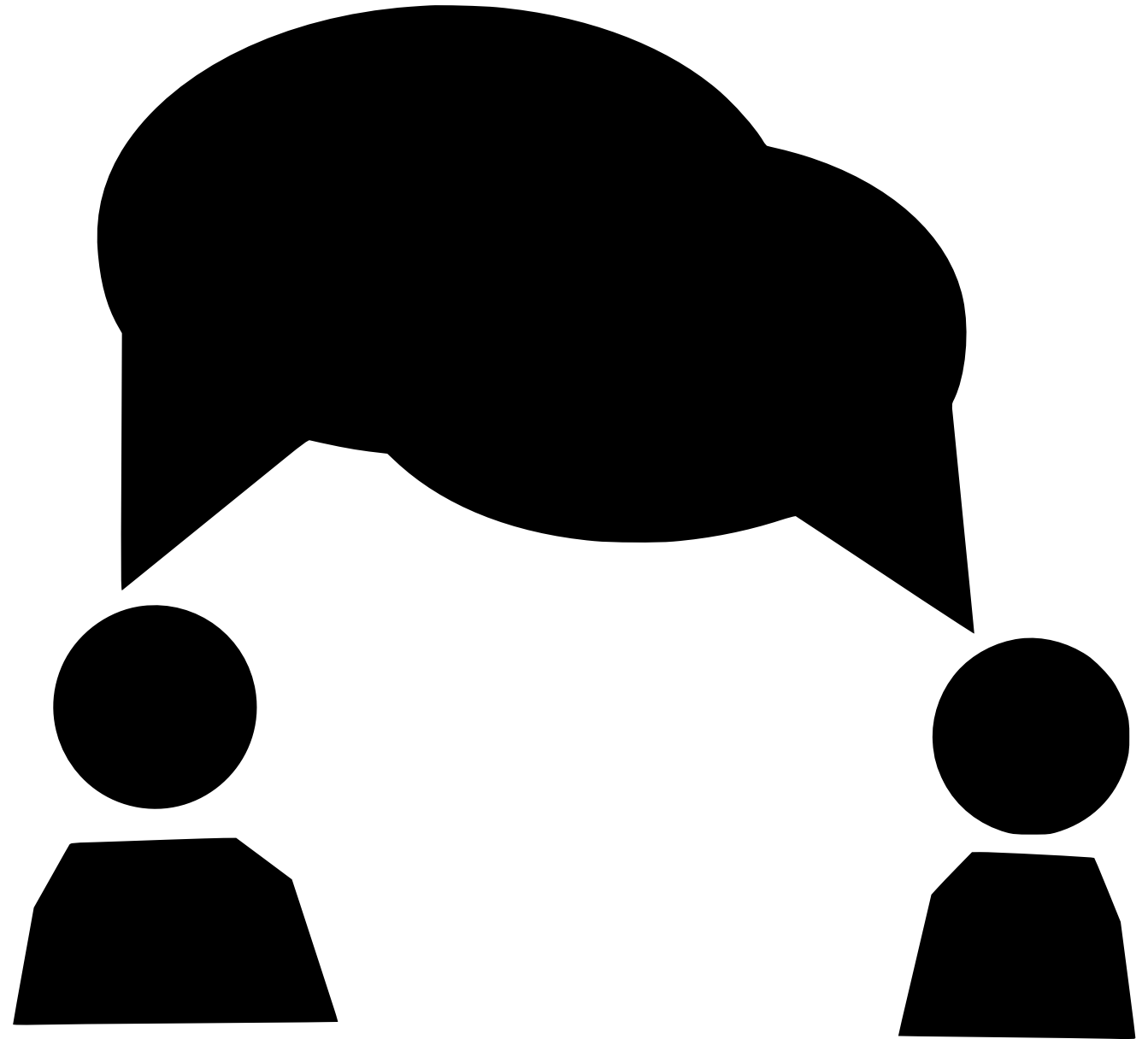
## PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO COMMON QUESTIONS

You play a critical role in ensuring that parents are well-informed about the benefits of vaccination and feel confident in their decision to vaccinate their child.

(This is all from the provider end, aka, the place where the shots are available)

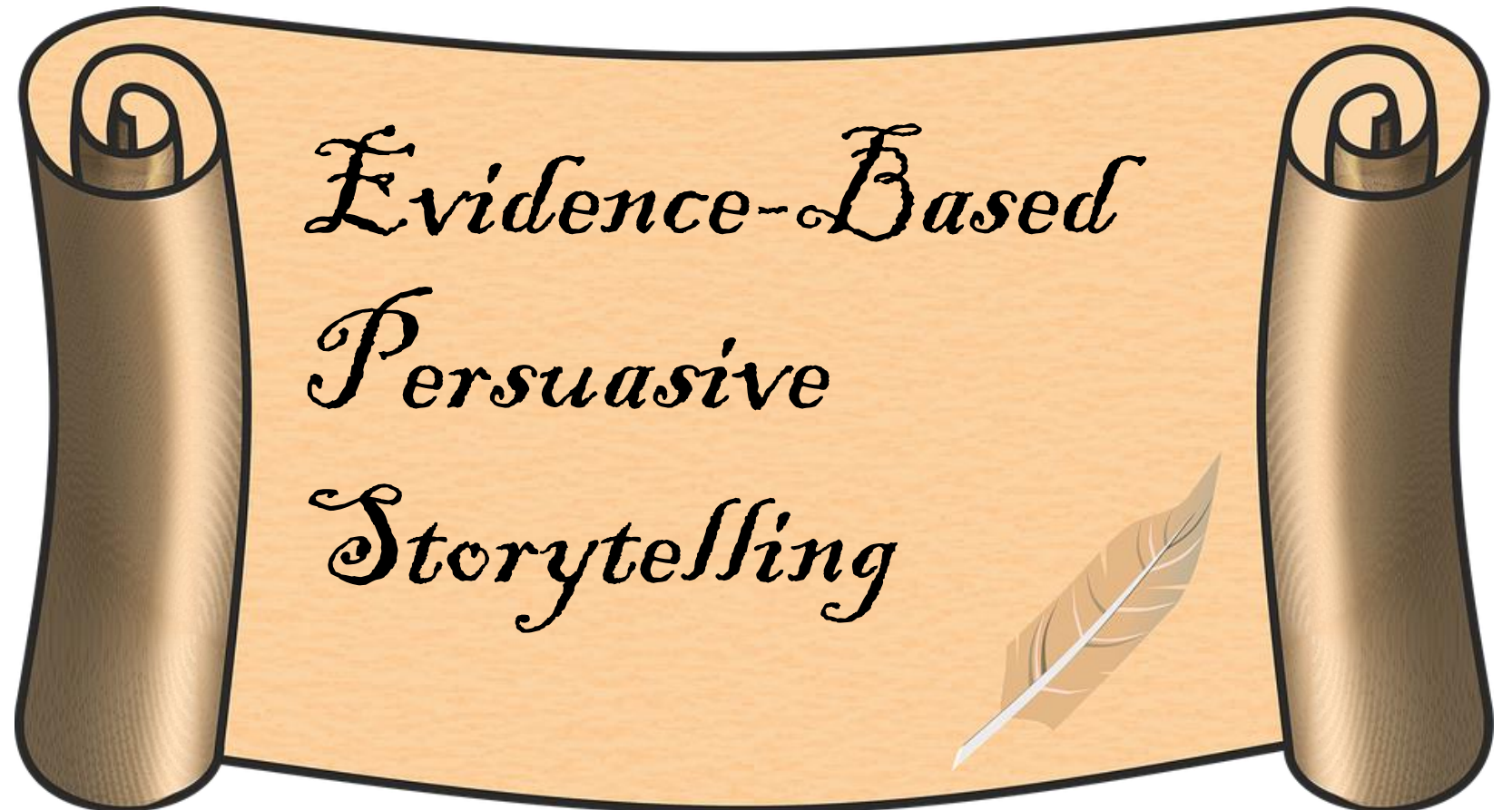
Another word  
for all of this:

Social science-  
informed  
persuasion

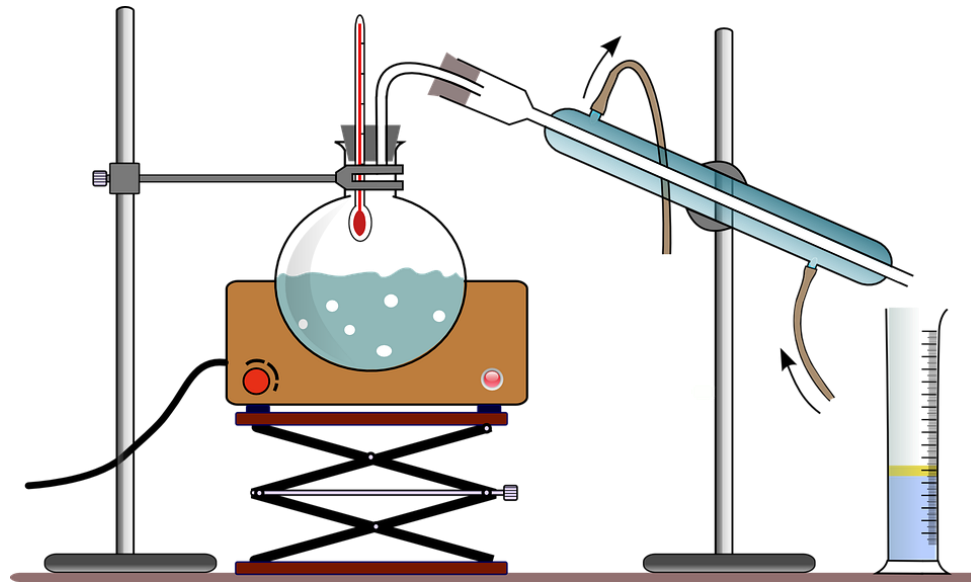


An effort to work with this formula here in  
Vermont:

Exhibit B.

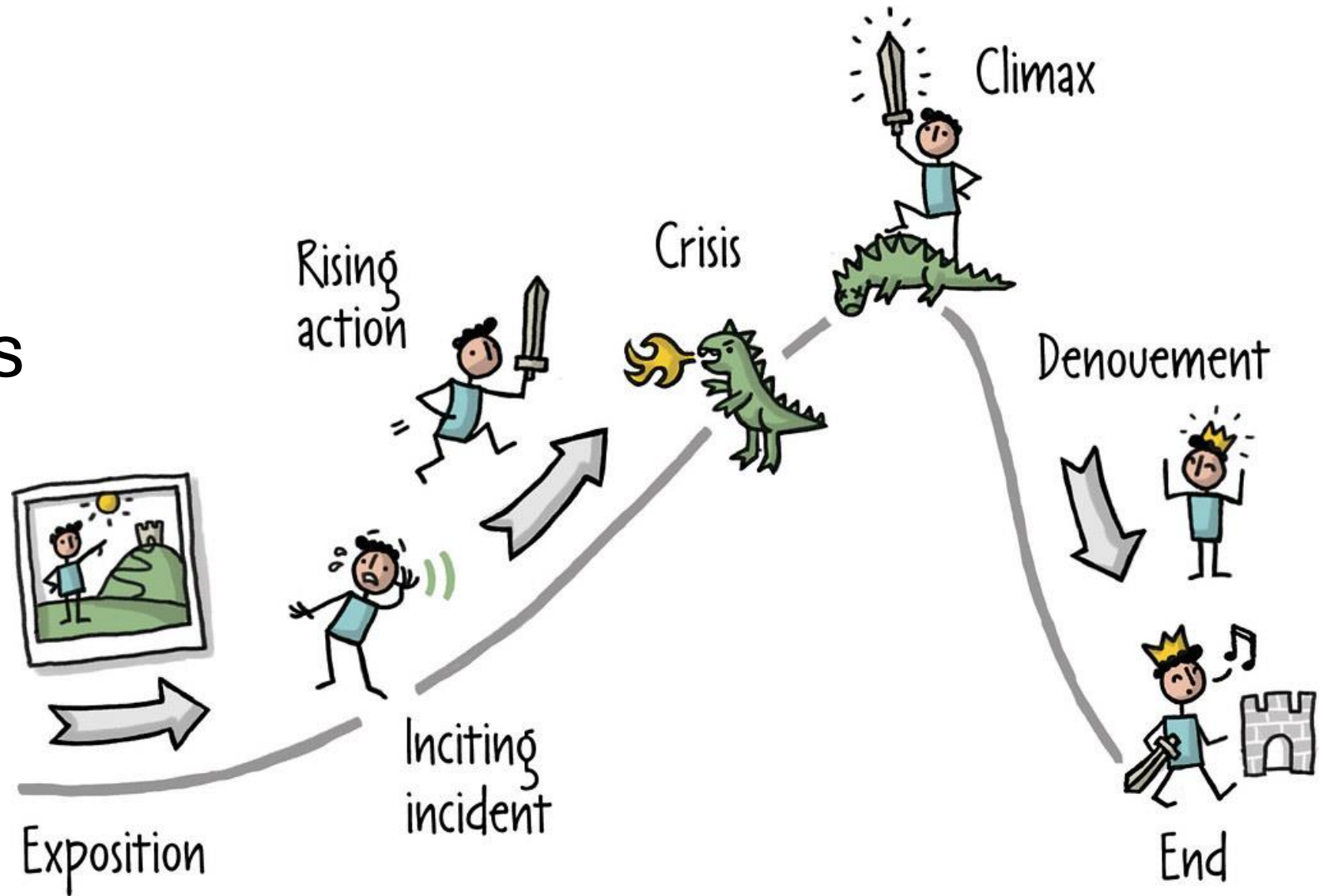


(Another form of social-science-informed persuasion)



The theory:

vaccine  
recommendations  
wrapped in story  
form have a  
uniquely  
persuasive  
effect ...



In other words, our group is comfortable with the communication end ...



But we needed to address the program end



So, to test the communication theory, we recruited partners ...

Partner 1:



The Harwood Union Unified School District  
(Washington County) to promote and host a clinic


Partner 2:



... to set up the clinic and provide the shots

Naturally, there has to be a community desire for the program:

In a survey released by our partner school, **over 54% of parents** answered that they would have their child vaccinated at an in-school HPV immunization clinic.



“Amazing! Our school rocks and rolls with all it provides. Thank you to you and all the staff who do so much for our children and families.”

Third:

We recruited and trained storytellers to help publicize the clinic



Two sample stories ...

If you had the chance to protect your child from painful and disfiguring cancer, would you?

Early in my nursing career, I worked on a head and neck surgical cancer floor. The memories of caring for the brave patients (mostly men) who could no longer speak and had become badly disfigured from surgery has never left me. At that time, smoking was the leading cause of these cancers.

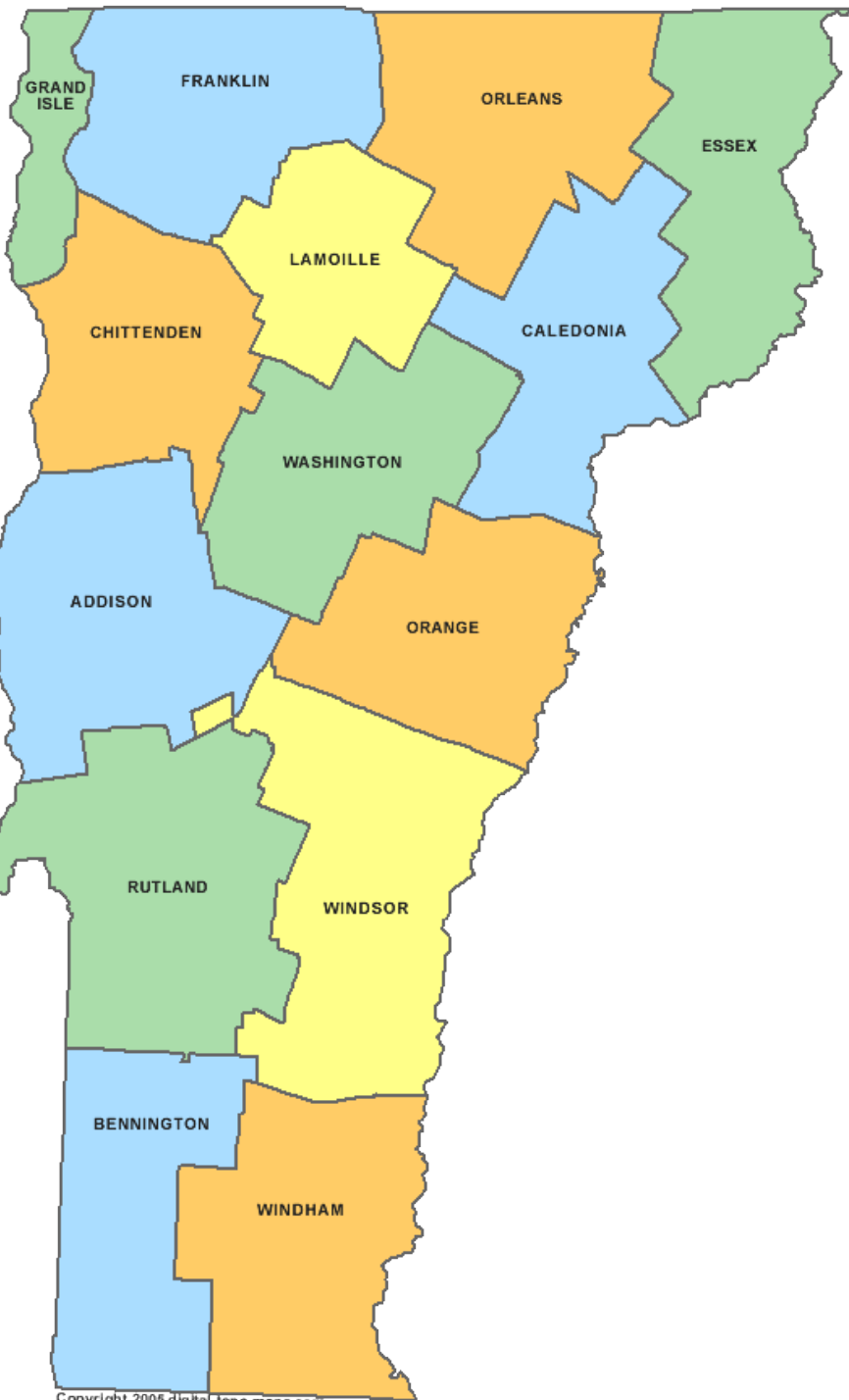
In the intervening years, the cause of these cancers has changed, and the human papilloma virus (HPV) has now been identified as the primary cause of the uptick throat cancers. An estimated 70% of these cancers in men are now known to be caused by HPV.

Protecting our kids from head and neck (including throat) cancer as well as five other HPV-related cancers is as simple as getting the shot. Crossett Brook Middle School is hosting a free HPV vaccination clinic for youth 9-18 on March 12. For more information go to: [https://huusd.org/blog/hpv-vaccine-clinic-registration is open](https://huusd.org/blog/hpv-vaccine-clinic-registration-is-open)

I'll never forget the sirens. There was a hospital up the street from where I lived in Brooklyn, NY, and in 2020, sirens wailed day and night as they brought in the victims of COVID-19, a disease that was killing 1000 people a day in New York City alone--my neighbors. I'm a scientist working on vaccines against developing-world diseases like HIV and tuberculosis, and so I saw firsthand how so many colleagues in my field pivoted to tackle Covid. They worked around the clock for months on end, and then, early in 2021, I turned on the news and saw video of the first people to receive the new Covid vaccine. I'll never forget one woman who got her shot with tears of joy and relief streaming down her face. I cried too. My friends had done it. In a year they made a safe and reliable vaccine that is estimated to have saved over 14 million lives in the U.S. alone.

So, you could say I feel pretty strongly about the power of vaccines.

On March 12, Crossett Brook Middle School is hosting an HPV vaccine clinic for youth between 9 and 18 years old. This vaccine saves lives by preventing six kinds of cancer, including 99% of cervical cancers. Unlike 2020, this time my neighbors can get the shot before the disease, and that feels good. Signing up your kid is simple: <https://calendar.app.google/4y2q7dsabveuLteRA>



This is all in support of a five-year grant application that went in this week

If we receive the money, we will implement this communication + program approach in several Vermont school districts around the state

# Resulting products

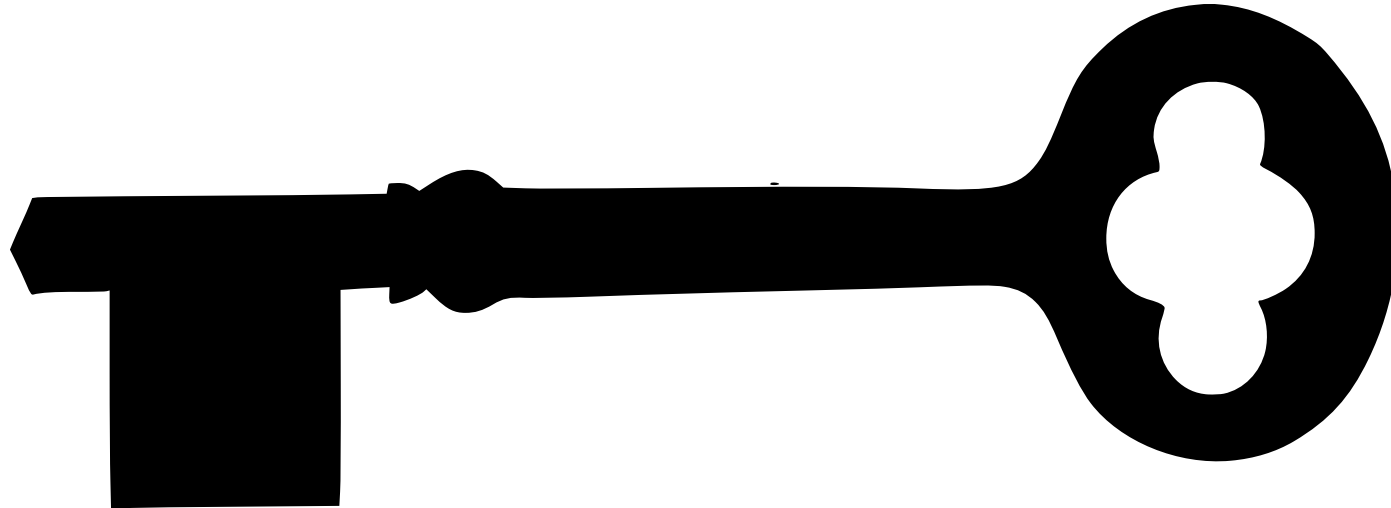
## ✓ Storytelling workshop guide

- Results in the form of attitudes changed and shots delivered (via pre-post design, website analytics, control communities, and comparisons using the Vermont Immunization Registry)
- A how-to toolkit to help states, municipalities, and community groups host their own clinics. (The toolkit will address communication + programming, from funding to working with schools to setting up vaccination stations.)



In closing ...

Combining communication AND programming is the key to an optimally successful effort to raise HPV vaccination rates



There's a lot to learn about the optimal mix of communication, cost, and shot availability ... not to mention other opportunities to implement this combination

# Thank you

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NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
**CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL**  
RESEARCH NETWORK



University  
of Vermont

Larner College of Medicine