



Prevention Connection

On the Cutting Edge of Cervical Cancer Policy

Prevention Connection

Quarterly Volume 3: Issue 3 September 2006

SEPTEMBER IS GYNECOLOGICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

September is the nationally recognized month for promoting awareness of gynecologic cancer.

This September 2006 there is much to talk about. One of the greatest strides in the fight against gynecologic cancer was made this year with the approval of a vaccine aimed at eliminating cervical cancer. The widespread use of this vaccine is expected to greatly diminish patient suffering and the economic burden from cervical cancer.

The Gynecologic Cancer Foundation (GCF) has launched an 18-month Cervical Cancer Public Education Campaign in collaboration with numerous national organizations concerned with women's health and cancer to heighten the public's understanding of cervical cancer and its important prevention and screening tools. The campaign will target four distinct populations: 1) Parents of pre-teens and young teens, 2) Young women age 17-26, including college women, 3) Adult women, and 4) Underserved and minority populations, particularly Latinas and African-American women who experience a disproportionate share of the morbidity and mortality of cervical cancer. The campaign's message, delivered in a variety of voices

Guest Contributing Author: Linda Miller, GCF Cervical Cancer Campaign Consultant, Gynecologic Cancer Foundation

and culturally appropriate language is "You can prevent cervical cancer. Vaccinate early. Screen regularly." The campaign will include radio ads, web broadcasts, magazine ads, an expert speakers' tour, a college athlete poster campaign and text messaging ads.

cancers: ovarian, cervical, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar cancer. It also includes a special section on the importance and role of clinical trials, as well as a section about familial breast-ovarian cancer syndrome. In the US, approximately 10% of women will develop breast cancer and 1.8% of

women will develop ovarian cancer sometime in their lifetime. However, women with familial breast-ovarian cancer syndrome have up to a 90% lifetime risk of developing breast or ovarian cancer, according to GCF.

Brochures, fact sheets, and a copy of the annual report will be available in print and on two GCF web sites: www.cervicalcancercampaign.org and www.thegcf.org. ■

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT AND GYNECOLOGICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

September is Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month. Also in September, news about the HPV vaccine will likely gain momentum, as the vaccine becomes more widely available and as states begin to address specific plans for its implementation. Furthermore, early in September, Women In Government announced key policy recommendations for state legislatures related to the implementation of HPV vaccines. This backdrop gives Women In Government an excellent opportunity to also educate women and parents of adolescent girls about HPV, the HPV vaccine and the importance of regular and accurate screening for the prevention of cervical cancer.

Also in September The Society of Gynecologic Oncologists released the fourth annual report: "2006 State of the State of Gynecologic Cancers: Fourth Annual Report to the Women of America." The report outlines the latest medical and scientific advances and provides descriptions, incidence rates, symptoms, screening and prevention information, and risk factors for the deadliest gynecologic



CERVICAL CANCER & HPV STATE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HPV VACCINE IMPLEMENTATION

Women In Government's Cervical Cancer and HPV State Legislative Task Force Meeting convened August 24-27 in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho to discuss the recent human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine approval and state strategies for cervical cancer prevention. Facilitated by Senators Gloria Lawlah (MD) and Connie Lawson (IN), the Task Force brought together a bipartisan group of state policymakers from across the country who have been active on bringing the issue of cervical cancer prevention to the forefront in their states, to develop the next steps for Women In Government's *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign* and specific recommendations (in bold) for state policy action.

In June 2006, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an HPV vaccine for girls and women between the ages of 9 and 26, marking a tremendous milestone in the fight against cervical cancer. The federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), subsequently voted to recommend that the HPV vaccine be given routinely to girls aged 11 and 12, and as young as 9 year olds, as well as providing the vaccine to all other FDA-approved age groups. The ACIP also issued a resolution that the vaccine be included in the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.

The CDC and Federal Department of Health and Human Services is widely expected to accept the ACIP's provisional recommendations as its final policy. Ultimately, however, *the states* will play a pivotal role in ensuring that the HPV vaccine becomes widely available to all approved age groups regardless of socioeconomic status.

Women In Government has identified six key areas where state-level policy will be critical to ensuring that the HPV vaccine moves effectively from the federal purview to the people who will directly benefit from it. The following text (in bold) outlines Women In Government's Cervical Cancer and HPV State Legislative Task Force recommendations for policy action.

The VFC program provides free immunization to uninsured and underinsured children up to age 18. The program is administered at the national

level by the CDC, which contracts with vaccine manufacturers to buy vaccines at reduced rates. VFC funds are awarded to state, local and territorial public health agencies for program operations and vaccine purchase. **States should direct dedicate funding streams to support VFC Program infrastructure, such as administration costs, providers' time, and education. State departments of health should develop and implement plans to ensure all girls and women aged 9 through 18 have access to and receive FDA-approved cervical cancer/HPV vaccines, with an emphasis on the routine vaccination of 11 and 12-year-old girls.**

The CDC, in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Association of Family Physicians, publishes the Childhood Immunization Schedule, which indicates recommended ages for the routine administration of currently licensed vaccines for children. It is widely expected that the HPV vaccine will be added to the Childhood Immunization Schedule.

To ensure that most eligible children have access to the FDA-approved HPV vaccine, **states should require cervical cancer/HPV vaccination for girls to enter middle school, in conjunction with other adolescent vaccines required at this time. Parents should be allowed to opt out in accordance with states' existing exemption allowances (e.g. medical, religious and/or philosophical).** Currently, all 50 states offer parents medical exemptions for routine vaccinations. Additionally, 48 states have religious exemptions and 20 states offer philosophical exemptions.

When the ACIP recommends a vaccine, most private insurers typically cover it, as leading medical groups have historically followed the ACIP's recommendations in developing their own medical guidelines. Some states, such as California, require insurers to cover vaccination for those age groups recommended by the ACIP. Women In Government's Task Force recommendations note that, **states should strongly encourage health plans to cover FDA-approved cervical cancer/HPV vaccines, Pap tests and HPV tests.**

A large number of constituents are on Medicaid, uninsured or underinsured. To aide these constituents with access to these lifesaving technologies, **states should require Medicaid to cover FDA-**



Left to right: Sen. Katie Dorsett (NC), Sen. Gloria Lawlah (MD), and Sen. Yvonne Prettner Solon (MN) at the HPV and Cervical Cancer Task Force Meeting.

approved cervical cancer/HPV vaccines for eligible 19-26 year-old women. Policymakers should ensure that public health programs are adequately funded and utilized to ensure that all other uninsured or underinsured females aged 9 to 26 have access to the vaccination.

The introduction of an HPV vaccine significantly changes the way stakeholders have traditionally approached cervical cancer prevention. Thus, education of stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, women, girls, parents, healthcare providers, etc.) about HPV, cervical cancer, the role of the newly available HPV vaccine and the importance of continued screening will be essential. Women In Government's Task Force recommends that, **state programs focused on cancer prevention and/or health should take the lead on developing and executing programs to educate and involve stakeholders about cervical cancer, HPV, and the role of available preventive technologies.**

The final Task Force recommendation involves statewide entities focused on cancer prevention. **States should ensure that statewide cervical cancer task forces and accountable entities are informed about and address new information and data about cervical cancer/HPV vaccines. Legislative action may be required to extend the parameters of task force timelines, members, etc.**

cont'd on page 3

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT



July 8-12, 2006 – World Cancer Congress – Washington, DC

The International Union Against Cancer's World Cancer Congress 2006 brought together the world's foremost cancer control leaders and practitioners. The opening ceremonies focused on the potential for the HPV vaccine to eradicate cervical cancer — a running theme throughout the Congress. Women In Government staff attended a symposium dedicated to the HPV vaccine to eradicate cervical cancer where they were able to hear experts in the field discuss the data behind HPV vaccines and impact of the vaccines on a global scale.

Half of the conference attendees were from outside the United States, creating a unique opportunity to share cancer control strategies from around the world. WIG staff were able to talk to leading clinicians, practitioners, governmental and organizational leaders, patient care providers and advocates, and public health experts to discuss the latest strategies that translate what is known and proven about cervical cancer control into action for diverse economic communities worldwide

Cervical cont'd from page 2

As part of the *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign*, Women In Government looks forward to educating its members and other legislators about these and other issues related to introduction of the HPV vaccine. Women In Government believes that the HPV vaccine should become part of comprehensive cervical cancer prevention programs that also use advanced and medically appropriate screening methods, such as HPV testing.

The HPV and Cervical Cancer Task Force is dedicated to creating state-level policy recommendations to ensure that HPV vaccines become available for the people who will directly benefit from them as quickly as possible. The policy recommendations cited here are available on Women In Government's website at www.womeningovernment.org/prevention. ■

July 26, 2006 – PAHO Partnering for HPV Vaccine Introduction Meeting – Guatemala City, Guatemala

Women In Government Senior Director of Public Policy, Sarah Wells, spoke at the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) "Partnering for HPV Vaccine Introduction" meeting in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The meeting convened over 100 representatives of the PAHO member countries and leading experts in the Americas on cervical cancer prevention and immunization. Women In Government gave a presentation focused on "Building the Case for Cervical Cancer Prevention Through Policy Development." The *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign* was highlighted as a model for using public policy to tackle cervical cancer, a major health problem in the Americas. Other speakers included health experts from PAHO, the World Health Organization and the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

October 9-11, 2006 – The *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign* Travels to Ireland

Women In Government President, Susan Crosby will be meeting with women policymakers in Ireland to raise political awareness about cervical cancer and garner support and political interest in the implementation of a national cervical cancer prevention program. Susan will present on the political support surrounding the *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign* and what the *Campaign* has achieved. ■

CHALLENGE TO ELIMINATE CERVICAL CANCER CAMPAIGN SUCCESS: PENNSYLVANIA

On July 7, 2006, Pennsylvania became the fortieth state to enact cervical cancer prevention legislation nationwide. Pennsylvania's new legislation, House Bill 801, sponsored by Rep. Julie Harhart, establishes a Cervical Cancer Task Force to evaluate proposals and make recommendations for the education and prevention of cervical cancer. With 40 states enacting legislation and 45 states introducing legislation, the *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign* is generating momentum as we enter the upcoming legislative

session. For more information regarding HPV, cervical cancer, or the *Campaign*, please contact the HPV & Cervical Cancer Policy Resource Center at 1-888-333-0164 or resourcecenter@womeningovernment.org. ■





YELLOW UMBRELLA TOUR COMING TO A CITY NEAR YOU!

This fall, cervical cancer survivor Christine Baze will launch her fourth nationwide Yellow Umbrella Tour, a cervical cancer fundraising and awareness campaign that will travel to 35 major cities across North America. The tour will be a series of live concerts in major markets, featuring Christine and headliner Kaki King. Christine and her efforts has been a key to the success of the *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign* over the years.

More information about Christine and the tour can be found on her non-profit organization's website, www.popsmeat.org, and www.yellowumbrellatour.com.

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT'S CHALLENGE TO ELIMINATE CERVICAL CANCER CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

Visit us online at www.womeningovernment.org/prevention to learn more about the *Campaign* and what you can do to help eliminate cervical cancer.

ACCESS THESE UPDATED ONLINE RESOURCES:

- *NEW* HPV and Cervical Cancer Patient Brochure
- HPV & Cervical Cancer Info
- Frequently Asked Questions
- HPV Vaccine Introduction: State Policy Backgrounder
- Updated Legislative Toolkit
- State Policy Recommendations for HPV Vaccine Implementation

To request new copies of the legislative toolkit, please contact the HPV & Cervical Cancer Policy Resource Center by calling 1-888-333-0164 or emailing resourcecenter@womeningovernment.org.

WIG is a national 501(c)(3), non-profit, bi-partisan organization of women state legislators providing leadership opportunities, networking, expert forums, and educational resources to address and resolve complex public policy issues.

PRSTD FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPRINGFIELD, VA
PERMIT NO. 6127

Women In Government
2600 Virginia Avenue, NW
Suite 709
Washington, DC 20037

