



**Women In Government  
Second Annual HPV and Cervical Cancer Summit  
Washington, DC  
November 16 – 18, 2006**

## **Introduction**

Worldwide, cervical cancer kills almost a quarter-million women every year. In the United States, an estimated 11,150 women are diagnosed with the disease and approximately 3,600 will die of it in 2007.<sup>1</sup> In response to this situation, Women In Government, a national 501(c)(3), non-profit, bi-partisan organization of women state legislators, launched the *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign* to mobilize state legislators to address cervical cancer prevention in their states. The mission of the *Campaign* is to address cervical cancer prevention by raising awareness and education with the goal of providing women with access to the most advanced and appropriate preventive technologies, including HPV Testing and vaccination, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or other factors.

In 2004 it was determined by the Board of Directors of Women In Government that bringing together legislators, public health advocates, state and federal government agency representatives, and members of the medical community would provide an important opportunity for these individuals to address options to overcome educational, screening, immunization and other barriers to HPV and cervical cancer prevention. In November of 2005, Women In Government convened the First Annual HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit, which resulted in a new paradigm to eliminate cervical cancer wherein stakeholders, regardless of their primary interests, could join forces to affect change. This framework of collaborative strategies offered broad and specific recommendations for increasing disease awareness, mobilizing individuals to seek screening and preventive services by improving access to healthcare technologies, and engaging stakeholders for continued dialogue.

In 2006, policymakers, public health officials and policy advocacy leaders were given the chance to build upon their collaborative work completed in 2005 at the Second Annual HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit, which was convened in Washington, DC from November 16-18, 2006. Approximately 30 state legislators, 25 state government agency representatives, 35 health advocates, and five federal government agency representatives participated. Sixteen of these individuals were expert speakers during the Summit. Overall, 43 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, and Ireland were represented.

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<sup>1</sup> The American Cancer Society, "How Many Women Get Cancer of the Cervix?," 30 November 2006, 16 October 2007 <[http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI\\_2\\_2\\_1X\\_How\\_many\\_women\\_get\\_cancer\\_of\\_the\\_cervix\\_8.asp?sitearea=>](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_2_1X_How_many_women_get_cancer_of_the_cervix_8.asp?sitearea=>)

The Second Annual Summit agenda included expert speakers who presented information on their various areas of expertise in HPV and cervical cancer prevention. Presentation topics ranged from an overview of cervical cancer prevention technologies, including screening and vaccination, to policy presentations on the necessary infrastructure to deliver these technologies, and panel presentations on the necessity of collaboration and partnership. Participants then used this information to discuss a national strategy to eliminate cervical cancer. Following the Summit, participants were contacted to assess the impact that attending the Summit had on their ability to engage in the process of eliminating cervical cancer. North Carolina State Representative Katie Dorsett (D); North Dakota State Representative Kathy Hawken (R); Indiana State Senator Connie Lawson (R); Dr. Jon Kim Andrus, Lead Senior Technical Advisor of the Immunization unit at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); and J.R. Ransom, Senior Analyst of the Immunization Project at the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) all provided their feedback, compiled here.

## **Presentations**

### *The Current Landscape of Cervical Cancer Prevention – Richard Richart, M.D.*

Dr. Ralph Richart, Emeritus Professor of Pathology in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Columbia University Medical Center, opened the Summit by discussing the current landscape of cervical cancer prevention. The cause of cervical cancer, the human papillomavirus (HPV), was credited as being the most common sexually transmitted infection. He pointed out, though, that most patients infected with HPV will not develop cervical cancer. In fact, he stated that only five percent of women with HPV would develop the disease. If detected early, patients can be monitored to ensure that HPV does not turn into invasive cervical cancer. Luckily, the virus is present for a significant length of time before cervical cancer has a chance to develop, which is a feature of the disease that makes it easier to detect at an early, pre-cancerous stage.

The long latent period of an HPV infection allows women who have a normal Pap Test *and* HPV Test to be tested three years later instead of having to return every year, which is the recommended strategy for patients who just have the Pap Test. Together, these two tests offer better medicine at a lower price, making the joint procedure more cost effective than an annual Pap Test.

Dr. Richart ended his presentation on cervical cancer prevention by talking about the newly available HPV vaccine, which he stated protects against not only cervical cancer, but some oral, anal, vaginal, and vulvar cancers as well. In his opinion, it makes the most sense to vaccinate young girls with the vaccine because they have the strongest immune system, and therefore respond most positively to the vaccine.

### *Breakthrough Technology: HPV Vaccines – Juan Felix, M.D.*

The role of technology in HPV prevention was presented by Dr. Juan Felix, Professor of Clinical Pathology and Obstetrics & Gynecology at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California. He discussed HPV in general, citing a study that found that within four years of becoming sexually active, 60 percent of female college students contracted HPV, despite the fact that most had only one or two partners. He also pointed out that, according to studies, HPV racially discriminates – Hispanic and Asian women are more likely to develop cervical cancer. Dr. Felix went on to talk about HPV vaccine school requirements. In his opinion, school vaccine requirements are the key to eradicating diseases and that doing so will help protect everyone regardless of socioeconomic status.

*Eradicating Diseases Worldwide Through Immunization – Jon Kim Andrus, M.D.*

Dr. Jon Andrus from the Pan American Health Organization began his presentation on disease control and using interventions that would reduce the risk of mortality from that disease. He pointed out that not only should vaccines rapidly be given to those who need them most, but these programs should leave something behind in the community in terms of a better trained medical network and a higher quality surveillance network to inspect for other viruses. Examples were given of other instances where this has happened and greatly benefitted the communities in which it occurred. He ended his presentation by illuminating the results of vaccinating children – a vaccinated child will be healthier and therefore do better in school, which will lead to healthier adulthood and the ability to be a more productive part of society.

*International Opportunities to Eliminate Cervical Cancer – Henrietta Campbell, M.D.*

Dr. Henrietta Campbell from the All Ireland Cancer Foundation talked about her experiences helping women with cervical cancer in Ireland. She called on the participants to help the women of the world protect themselves from this disease. One way she hopes to contribute to this goal herself is to host an event similar to Women In Government's HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit in Ireland. Dr. Campbell has been instrumental in organizing a national cervical cancer screening program for the women of Ireland.

*Strategies for Cervical Cancer Prevention: The Importance of Continued Screening – Mark S. DeFranesco, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.O.G.; Cosette Wheeler, Ph.D.*

Dr. Mark DeFranesco, the Chief Medical Officer at Women's Health Connecticut, and Dr. Cosette Wheeler, Professor in the Department of Molecular Genetics & Microbiology at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, discussed the importance of continued screening to prevent cervical cancer. One Dr. DeFranesco's main messages was that until cervical cancer is completely eradicated by the vaccine, the need for comprehensive screening cannot be ignored. Dr. Wheeler's presentation added, among other important points, that women's failures to be screened have been identified as the single most contributable factor in the development of invasive cervical cancer.

*Be an Advocate for Your Health – Marie Savard, M.D.; Christine Baze*

Dr. Marie Savard, Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at Jefferson Medical College, and Christine Baze, cervical cancer survivor and Founder of Popsmeat.org and the Yellow Umbrella Tour, both talked about how to be an advocate for your health. Dr. Savard discussed the issue from a doctor's point of view and encourage participants to think of creative policies to ensure girls have all three shots in the HPV vaccine series.

Christine Baze told her story of being diagnosed with cervical cancer and her life as a survivor. She talked about her organization and the musical tour she created to help spread the word about HPV and cervical cancer and the steps women can take to protect themselves against this disease.

*Cost-Effectiveness of Cervical Cancer Prevention – Sue Goldie, M.D., M.P.H.*

The cost-effectiveness of the HPV vaccine was discussed by Dr. Sue Goldie, Professor of Health Decision Science in the Department of Health Policy and Management at Harvard School of Public Health. The vaccine was described as being a cost-effective tool to prevent the development of cervical cancer. She felt that universal vaccination would help everyone, but the biggest benefits would be felt by minority and low-income populations who disproportionately suffer from HPV and lack of access to preventive medicine.

*HPV Vaccine Implementation and Practice Guidelines – Eileen Dunne, M.D., M.P.H.*

Dr. Eileen Dunne, Staff Medical Epidemiologist in the Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch in the Division of STD Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gave a

presentation on the complicated options for both funding and receiving the vaccine. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program was discussed, as well as the two-tier policies that make it difficult for non-VFC children to receive the vaccine. She also emphasized that there is a very little clinical data on how effective it is for a women or girl to get just one or two of the three doses of the HPV vaccine, stressing the need to create a platform to ensure all three doses are received.

*Comprehensive Cancer Control – Carol Friedman, D.O.; Tom Kean M.P.H.*

Collaboration as a key to eliminating cervical cancer was discussed by Carol Friedman, Chief of Comprehensive Cancer Control Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Tom Kean, Executive Director of C-Change. Dr. Friedman presentation's included information about coalitions and how legislatures can play a role in eliminating cancer. Then, Mr. Kean discussed C-Change's mission, to leverage the leadership and expertise of all sectors of society to eliminate cancer as a major public health problem at the earliest possible time, and their efforts as a community of the nation's key cancer leaders to act as a catalyst for identifying issues and major challenges facing the cancer community and for initiating collaborative actions to complement the efforts of individual C-Change Members. He cited this as being key to the successful eradication of cancers in the United States.

*Utilizing Preventive Technology to Eliminate Cervical Cancer: Best Practices – Walter Kinney, M.D.*

Dr. Walter Kinney, Gynecologic Oncologist and Associate Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, presented information to Summit participants on best practices in using technology to eliminate cervical cancer. In particular, he discussed the HPV Test and how effective it can be in detecting the virus. He then went on to talk about the appropriate times and instances for women to be tested for HPV. He ended by stating that improving access to screening tools for all women and educating women about cervical cancer were both essential in eliminating the disease.

*Opportunities for Prevention: Partnerships for Success – Senator Beverly Hammerstrom; J.R. Ransom, MPH; Pernessa Seele; Michelle Hannah*

Partnering for success was the focus of Retired State Senator Beverly Hammerstrom (R-MI), J.R. Ransom, Senior Analyst at the National Association of County and City Health Officials, Pernessa Seele, Founder and Executive Director of The Balm in Gilead, and Michelle Hannah, Founder and President of Celebrate Life Foundation. These individuals all discussed their experiences in collaborating to eliminate cancer, as well as how to be effective in partnering for progress. Senator Hammerstrom gave the participants a legislator's perspective, and Ms. Seele and Ms. Hannah talked about how to work with non-profit organizations. Mr. Ransom provided critical information on the need to engage city and county health officials in implementing the HPV vaccine.

### **Discussions: How to Work with Stakeholders in the States**

Following the presentations, participants engaged in group discussions. The topics included: HPV vaccine implementation opportunities and challenges; the necessary role of screening in the changing cervical cancer prevention environment; and educating women about HPV and cervical cancer.

As a result of these discussions, participants came to a broad consensus that widespread access to HPV vaccines is critical. At the same time, many health advocates urged that when women are educated about the vaccine, they must also be informed about the importance of continued screening. In order to reach the goal of eliminating cervical cancer, participants recognized the necessity of working together across stakeholder groups to collaboratively create vaccination

programs, enhance screening programs, and educate women about HPV and cervical cancer. Through collaboration of all stakeholders in creating a comprehensive preventive approach, it is possible to realize the collective goal of eradicating cervical cancer, with an emphasis on underserved populations including rarely and never screened women and uninsured/underinsured girls and women.

## **Case Studies**

### *Representative Katie Dorsett (NC)*

State Representative Katie Dorsett (D-NC) was an active participant in discussions throughout the Summit. She had previously attended other sessions on HPV and cervical cancer and, at the time of the Summit, was preparing to introduce cervical cancer legislation during the 2007 legislative session. In preparation for introducing HB 938, she utilized materials from Women In Government's 2006 HPV & Cervical Cancer Task Force Meeting, as well as the Summit. The bill Representative Dorsett introduced following the Summit was an education/prevention bill that was passed and ratified. She credits her initial interest in this subject and her preparation for the sponsorship and passage of her bill to Women In Government's HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit.

### *Representative Kathy Hawken (ND)*

Prior to attending the HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit, State Representative Kathy Hawken (R-ND) had some knowledge of HPV and cervical cancer that she gained from other Women In Government meetings. However, she found that attending the Summit broadened her understanding of the issue and was a catalyst for her to introduce legislation. She found that the meeting was very helpful in educating participants on the current status of HPV and cervical cancer and that listening to other legislators' experiences in attempting to pass legislation on this issue was extremely valuable.

As a result of her attendance, Representative Hawken co-sponsored HB 1471 during the 2007 legislative session to provide educational materials to doctors, health clinics, and other local groups in North Dakota. In preparation, Women In Government materials on the topic were given to other legislators and HPV & Cervical Cancer Policy Resource Center notepads were passed out to all of the female state legislators. Additionally, the public service announcement she had recorded at Women In Government played often during the session, which she feels convinced a number of her fellow policymakers to vote in favor of the bill. Because of these efforts, the bill was passed and a small appropriation was allocated to the initiative.

### *Senator Connie Lawson (IN)*

During Women In Government's Second Annual HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit, State Senator Connie Lawson (R-IN) was responsible for welcoming participants to the meeting and participating in the roundtable discussions, which included talking about the public service announcement she recorded for Women In Government. Senator Lawson is very knowledgeable about and interested in HPV and cervical cancer prevention and has attended nearly every meeting that Women In Government has held on the subject. Still, she reports that she learns something new at every event.

Following the meeting, Senator Lawson introduced SB 327, an HPV vaccine school requirement bill, during Indiana's 2007 legislative session. The bill was eventually changed to be an HPV and cervical cancer educational requirement whereby information on this topic, including the HPV vaccine, had to be distributed to the parents of female students entering the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. In preparation for talking about the bill in committee and on the Senate floor, more than once she referred to materials she received at the Summit.

Senator Lawson attributes the eventual passage of her bill to the education she gained and the support she was given by Women In Government. She also cites her participation in the Summit as a key role in her efforts to move Indiana forward in preventing cervical cancer through public policy.

*Dr. Jon Kim Andrus, M.D., Lead Senior Technical Advisor of the Immunization, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)*

Dr. Jon Kim Andrus' participation in the Second Annual HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit consisted of presenting information on disease eradication and how accelerated disease control tactics are relevant for cancer control, as well as listening to presentations given by the other expert speakers, which he thought were excellent. He felt, overall, that the audience was very receptive to his message and were highly committed to cervical cancer prevention. Dr. Andrus commented that the chance to present at the Summit provided him with the opportunity to meet other professionals dedicated to this issue, which was most the most significant part of his participation in the Summit. As he is working on ways to improve collaboration and advocacy efforts among different dedicated groups and individuals, he found the experience of participating in the Summit particularly valuable.

Among some of the contacts he made at the Summit was Christine Baze, a Boston musician and cervical cancer advocate who is herself a cervical cancer survivor. Following the Summit, Ms. Baze was able to participate in PAHO events, including their Women's Health Day event. Also, in collaboration with PAHO's publication department, she has written an advocacy song in Spanish for cervical cancer prevention and accompanied their Deputy Director to Capitol Hill where she gave a briefing on the topic, in addition to singing her new song.

*J.R. Ransom, M.P.H., Senior Analyst, Immunization Project, National Association of Country and City Health Officials (NACCHO)*

Presenting on partnering for success as an opportunity for cervical cancer prevention was J.R. Ransom's main role at the Summit. By connecting to other partners, engaging in dialogue, sharing information, and learning of their partners' activities and resources, NACCHO has been able to share a much wider array of information and materials with their members, who can then share resources within their communities.

Since the Summit, NACCHO has hosted three roundtable meetings related to the HPV vaccine and some of the issues surrounding the implementation of the vaccine, including HPV vaccine school requirements, developing a pre-teen and adolescent health platform, creating a plan to improve access and coverage, and addressing issues of equity and ethics in the health care system in terms of who does and does not have access to the vaccines. They have written a communications checklist for their members to aid them in understanding the spectrum of issues they should be able to address around HPV disease and vaccines. Additionally, they developed policy statements on adolescent health and HPV vaccine school requirements and published in the summer of 2007 issue of NACCHO Exchange, a newsletter dedicated to HPV vaccine and adolescent health. Currently, they are developing an HPV vaccine school requirement checklist for state and local public health officials.

## **Conclusion**

The Second Annual HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit was generally cited as being a success by participants, many of whom have used the invaluable information presented at the Summit to

initiate cervical cancer prevention initiatives through their legislatures, health departments, and health advocacy groups. In addition to State Representatives Katie Dorsett (D-NC) and Kathy Hawken (R-ND), and State Senator Connie Lawson (R-IN), other legislators in attendance were also inspired to sponsor legislation on this topic and used important information they learned from the Summit to do so. Additionally, Dr. Jon Kim Andrus from PAHO found participating in the Summit very useful through the contacts he made, which have helped him and his organization continue their mission of cervical cancer prevention, and J.R. Ransom from NACCHO has found connections between the information that is used in his organization to what is being done at Women In Government and other organizations. Through convening this annual Summit, Women In Government will continue to serve as a national leader, bringing together key stakeholders on HPV and cervical cancer issues, and working towards the goal that no woman will die from this preventable disease.

*Women In Government's Third Annual HPV & Cervical Cancer Summit will be held November 15-17, 2007 in Washington, DC.*