



## Executive Summary

### **Partnering for Progress 2007: The “State” of Cervical Cancer Prevention in America**

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*Partnering for Progress 2007: The “State” of Cervical Cancer Prevention in America* is the third annual review of state efforts to eliminate cervical cancer compiled by Women In Government in conjunction with the “Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign.” The Campaign is based on the premise that while great progress has been made in fighting cervical cancer over the last 60 years, thanks to the development and widespread use of Pap tests, there must be a renewed effort to eliminate this preventable disease through advocacy, advanced technology and public policy. Furthermore, Women In Government strongly supports a collaborative approach to cervical cancer prevention, enlisting the participation and support of stakeholders from across the globe at annual conferences and through the Campaign.

Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women. In the United States, the American Cancer Society estimates that 9,710 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2006 and more than 3,700 women will die of the disease. Recent advances in the medical understanding of cervical cancer, particularly that cervical cancer is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), and the availability of new technologies for preventing HPV and cervical cancer put the elimination of cervical cancer within reach. An HPV test now is available to detect high-risk types of the virus that can lead to cervical cancer. When used in conjunction with a Pap test in women 30 and older, it is nearly 100% effective in identifying women who require early intervention.

In addition, in June of 2006, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an HPV vaccine, called Gardasil,<sup>®</sup> for girls and women between the ages of 9 and 26. This vaccine is 100% effective in preventing infection with high-risk types of HPV (types 16 and 18) that account for approximately 70% of cervical cancers. A second HPV vaccine, called Cervarix,<sup>™</sup> that has been shown to be equally effective against types 16 and 18, is expected to be submitted for FDA approval in 2007. In addition to the development of these new technologies, cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates continue to decline across the country.

This year’s report shows continued progress in the fight against cervical cancer. The report charts a continued decline in cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates; robust rates for Pap screening; coverage of advanced technologies, including the HPV test; and significant legislative activity aimed at eliminating cervical cancer by increasing access to screening and treatment services, raising awareness, and promoting better coordination of state resources and efforts through statewide accountable entities, such as task forces.

However, women still die needlessly from cervical cancer, which is a preventable disease. The report notes significant shortfalls in key areas, including dramatic racial disparities in incidence, mortality, and screening rates and a continued lack of access to care for low-income women, which will require additional collaborative efforts to address.

State scores show continued improvement across the board, and, for the first time, one state, Minnesota, has achieved the score of Excellent. Scores ranged from a low of six out of 18 possible points for Idaho to a high of 15 out of 18 possible points for Minnesota. A total of 13 states received a grade of Very Good, up from 11 states in 2006. A total of 30 states received a grade of Good and 6 states plus the District of Columbia received a grade of Fair.



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### Key Findings

- For the first time, one state—Minnesota—received a grade of Excellent (15 out of 18 possible points), marking a milestone in state efforts to eliminate cervical cancer.
- A majority of states and the District of Columbia saw a decrease in both cervical cancer incidence and mortality.
- Just under half of the states (49%) experienced an increase in their rate of uninsured women.
- State legislators continue to advance policies to address cervical cancer prevention, including measures designed to increase screening and treatment options, bring together stakeholders in collaborative initiatives, and raise awareness of cervical cancer and HPV.
- Despite overall progress in the elimination of cervical cancer, disparities continue in terms of incidence, mortality, and screening at the national level. These systemic weaknesses may undermine the ability of all women to have access to and utilize new, preventive technologies.

The availability of new technologies such as the HPV test and HPV vaccines creates a new set of challenges for states in terms of ensuring that all women can and do take advantage of these tools. States must work to create the necessary infrastructure to support the integration of cervical cancer screening and vaccination in comprehensive cervical cancer prevention programs that address issues of access and insurance coverage, while increasing awareness and education.

Finally, Women In Government believes that no single person or entity can achieve success on this issue alone. Therefore, the focus of this year's report is "collaboration" and we strongly recommend that stakeholders work together in their efforts to eliminate cervical cancer. Women In Government is committed to collaboration as well and invites all interested parties to join us at our Annual HPV and Cervical Cancer Summit, which provides an opportunity for education and dialogue on this important issue.