INTRODUCTION

According to the American Cancer Society, in 2015, approximately 12,900 women in the United States are expected to be diagnosed with cervical cancer, while 4,100 women are expected to die from the disease. Each year, the burden for cervical human papillomavirus (HPV)-related diseases stands around $8 billion dollars, with $4.4 billion spent on cervical cancer treatments alone.¹ These exceptional costs, both human and financial, are simply too high, especially when there are many preventative measures that can be taken to prevent the development of HPV-related diseases, especially cervical cancer.

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV, a common virus spread by skin-to-skin contact. There are over 150 types, or strains, of HPV, many of which are harmless to humans, however, several types of HPV, known as “high-risk,” can convert normal cells on the cervix into cancerous ones. If left unchecked and untreated, these cells can turn into invasive cervical cancer. When detected at an early stage, cervical cancer has a five-year survival rate of 91 percent. However, the five-year survival rate plummets to a mere 16 percent when cervical cancer is caught at an advanced stage.

Cervical cancer and cervical cancer-related death can be prevented. Use of screening and vaccination can diminish the prevalence HPV as well as the incidence of cervical cancer and cervical cancer death. Greater use of these proven prevention measures could avert the loss of more than 4,000 lives annually. Furthermore, increasing the use of these services and diminishing the incidence of cervical cancer would result in total savings of more than $4.4 million to the U.S. healthcare system each year. In order to support and sustain cervical cancer prevention, leadership, collaboration, and commitment among policymakers and researchers is vital.

Women In Government’s HPV & Cervical Cancer Policy and Legislative Toolkit, 3rd Edition aims to provide policymakers with the resources they need to enact sound policy surrounding HPV as well as HPV-related cancers, with a specific focus on cervical cancer. Our toolkit includes fact sheets, frequently asked questions, and how-to-guides for social media and town halls, as well as sample presentations, correspondence, and resources to address HPV and cervical cancer among constituents and colleagues.

To access our toolkit online, please visit
