



## Preventing Cancer In The Community

(NAPSA)—Once the leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States, cervical cancer is now the most preventable female cancer. Yet it affects women of color more than it does white women.

One reason is that women of color are diagnosed with cervical cancer at a later stage than are white women. Black women are more likely to die from cervical cancer than women of other races or ethnicities, possibly because of decreased access to Pap testing or follow-up treatment.

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by a persistent infection with human papillomavirus (HPV). Almost everyone who is sexually active will be infected with HPV sometime in his or her life. Most of the time the infection goes away, but sometimes, HPV infections can lead to cancer.

Fortunately, many of the HPV infections that cause cervical cancer can be prevented with vaccination. HPV vaccine can decrease cervical cancer rates and help improve the health of women of color in every community.

Dr. Iyabode Beysolow, a pediatrician in the Immunization Services Division at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), explains: "We have an entire generation of girls we could protect from getting cervical cancer. Every year, 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 4,000 die. If we can protect girls now with HPV vaccine, we could drastically reduce these numbers."

HPV also causes vulvar, vaginal, penile, anal and oropharyngeal (back of throat, base of tongue



**Preventative vaccines and prompt and proper treatment can save the lives of many women of color who are susceptible to cervical cancer.**

and tonsils) cancers. Screening programs don't exist for these cancers, so HPV vaccine is even more important for prevention.

There are many ways to reduce your risk for HPV-related cancer:

- Get the HPV vaccine for boys and girls when they are 11 or 12 years old.
- For adult women, see your doctor regularly and get a Pap test when your doctor recommends it.
- Follow up with your doctor if your Pap test results are not normal.
- If your doctor says you have cervical cancer, ask to be referred to a doctor who specializes in treating cancers like this.

• Help spread the word that HPV vaccine is cancer prevention.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/Features/HPVvaccine/](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HPVvaccine/).