

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Urges Parents to Vaccinate Their Children Against Human Papillomavirus**

BISMARCK, N.D.—The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) reminds the public that everyone, girls and boys, between the ages of 11 and 26 should receive the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for the prevention of cervical and other cancers during National Cervical Health Awareness Month in January.

According to Molly Howell, Immunization Program Manager with the NDDoH, every 20 minutes someone in the United States is diagnosed with HPV-related cancer. “We have an amazing opportunity to prevent certain types of cancer in future generations through HPV vaccination,” said Howell. “Sadly, only 41.7 percent of girls and 25.3 percent of boys between 13 and 17 years of age in North Dakota are completely vaccinated against HPV.

A three-dose series of HPV vaccine for all adolescents 11 to 12 years of age, with catch-up vaccination at ages 13 to 26, can prevent HPV infection and its associated cancers. “It is important to be vaccinated against HPV early, before being exposed,” said Howell. “Three out of four new HPV cases are found in people ages 15 to 24.”

“HPV vaccines were studied extensively for years prior to being approved by the Food and Drug Administration,” said Howell. “They continue to be monitored for safety since their licensure almost ten years ago. The most common side effects of HPV vaccine are soreness and redness at the injection site, fever, headache, nausea, and muscle pain. More than 86 million doses of HPV vaccine have been given out in the United States, with millions more administered worldwide, and vaccine studies continue to show that HPV vaccines are safe.”

North Dakota participates in the Vaccines For Children (VFC) federal entitlement program, which provides free vaccine for children 18 years of age and younger who are American Indian, Medicaid-eligible, uninsured or have insurance that does not cover vaccinations. However, most insurance plans do cover HPV vaccine. The North Dakota Immunization Program also has an adult vaccination program that provides HPV vaccines to uninsured or underinsured adults. Contact your health care provider or local public health unit for more information about these vaccine programs.

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In an effort to increase HPV vaccination rates, the North Dakota Immunization Program has been sending recall notices to parents of adolescents ages 12 to 17 who are 30 or more days behind on their adolescent immunizations, including those who have started but not completed the HPV series. HPV informational postcards are sent to the parents of adolescents turning 11, encouraging them to vaccinate their children against HPV. Additionally, the North Dakota Immunization Program is conducting a statewide television, radio and online media campaign to promote HPV vaccination. Parents are encouraged to visit [www.getHPVvaccine.com](http://www.getHPVvaccine.com) or [www.cdc.gov/hpv](http://www.cdc.gov/hpv) for more information

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