

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Department of Health Urges Parents to Get Their Children Vaccinated Against Human Papillomavirus

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

According to Molly Howell, immunization program manager with the NDDoH, someone in the United States is diagnosed with HPV-related cancer every 20 minutes. “We have an amazing opportunity to prevent certain types of cancer in future generations through HPV vaccination,” said Howell. “Thankfully, HPV vaccination rates in North Dakota are increasing. Almost seventy percent of teens ages 13 to 17 have started the HPV series.”

The HPV vaccine is recommended for both girls and boys at ages 11 or 12. “It is important to be vaccinated against HPV early, before being exposed,” said Howell. “Three out of every four new HPV cases are found in people ages 15 to 24.”

Most insurance plans cover HPV vaccinations, but when insurance is not available, there are other programs that may help. 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. 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.

North Dakotans can get more information about the HPV vaccine at www.ndhealth.gov/Immunize/HPV/. It is important to vaccinate children today to protect them from cancer tomorrow.

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