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IU Simon Cancer Center, nation's cancer centers jointly endorse updated HPV vaccine recommendations

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INDIANAPOLIS -- Recognizing a critical need to improve national vaccination rates for the human papillomavirus (HPV), Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center has again united with each of the 69 National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer centers in issuing a joint statement in support of recently revised recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

According to the CDC, incidence rates of HPV-associated cancers have continued to rise, with approximately 39,000 new HPV-associated cancers now diagnosed each year in the United States. Although HPV vaccines can prevent the majority of cervical, anal, oropharyngeal (middle throat) and other genital cancers, vaccination rates remain low across the country, with just 41.9 percent of girls and 28.1 percent of boys completing the recommend vaccine series.

The new guidelines from the CDC recommend that children ages 11 to 12 should receive two doses of the HPV vaccine at least six months apart. Adolescents and young adults ages 15 and older should continue to complete the three-dose series.

"The two-dose regimen for those who initiate vaccination at age 14 or younger provides similar protection to the three-dose series, while reducing the cost and burden of vaccination," [Gregory Zimet](#), PhD, professor of pediatrics and clinical psychology in the Section of Adolescent Medicine at the IU School of Medicine and a researcher at the [IU Simon Cancer Center](#), said.

Research shows there are a number of barriers to overcome to improve vaccination rates, including a lack of strong recommendations from physicians and parents not understanding that this vaccine protects against several types of cancer.

In an effort to overcome these barriers, NCI-designated cancer centers have organized a continuing series of national summits to share new research, discuss best practices and identify collective action toward improving vaccination rates.

The original joint statement, published in January 2016, was the major recommendation from a [summit](#) hosted at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in November 2015, which brought together experts from the NCI, CDC, American Cancer Society and more than half of the NCI-designated cancer centers.

The updated statement is the result of discussions from the most recent [summit](#), hosted this summer by the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute. Nearly 150 experts from across the country gathered in Columbus to present research updates and plan future collaborative actions across NCI-designated cancer centers.

"Cervical cancer and other HPV-associated cancers are preventable,"

[Darron Brown](#), MD, MPH, professor of medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases and professor of microbiology and immunology at the IU School of Medicine and a researcher at the IU Simon Cancer Center, said. "Vaccinating girls against HPV can markedly reduce the chances of developing cervical cancer. Boys also need the vaccine to prevent HPV-related cancers that can occur in men."

Indiana University has long been a leader in HPV research, with Dr. Brown starting the HPV laboratory in 1989. Dr. Brown was involved in the development of Gardasil and Gardasil9, two of the three FDA-approved vaccines that have been used against infection by the human papillomavirus. He played a key role in the pre-clinical research into Gardasil, including demonstrating the effectiveness of a prototype vaccine, as well as the clinical testing of it.

Also, Dr. Zimet is co-director of the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis [Center for HPV Research](#), which comprises more than 20 HPV researchers from IU, Purdue, the University of Notre Dame and Indiana State University. Those researchers collaborate to better understand HPV transmission and infection and ways to prevent it. Dr. Zimet is an international leader in behavioral science research on HPV vaccination.

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