



## NEWS RELEASE

### Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

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### HPV COVERAGE LEVELS OFF IN 2012; BURSTEIN CALLS FOR INCREASED EDUCATION

*Vaccinations for Human Papillomavirus Fail to Increase from 2011-12; Parental Education Stressed*

**ERIE COUNTY, NY**— Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein today called attention to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) summarizing national human papillomavirus (“HPV”) vaccination coverage levels among adolescent girls aged 13-17 years from the 2007-2012 National Immunization Survey-Teen (“NIS-Teen”). The report’s findings indicate that, although vaccination coverage of one or more doses of any HPV vaccine increased from 25% in 2007 to 53% in 2011, coverage in 2012 (54%) was basically unchanged from 2011. If HPV vaccine had been administered during health-care visits when another vaccine was administered, vaccination coverage of one or more doses could have reached 93%.

“These numbers indicate that, despite the availability of vaccines and ample opportunity to deliver them, we are seeing a plateau in the number of adolescent girls who are getting vaccinated,” **said Burstein**. “Last year was the first year since 2007 that the number of vaccinations did not appreciably increase, which means that millions of adolescent girls are being unnecessarily put at risk of developing cervical and other HPV-related cancers, such as throat and anal cancers. Improving coverage is essential for the health of the younger generation. The HPV vaccine is given to young girls to protect them when they are adults. All parents should be aware of the risks that failing to vaccinate poses.”

Since 2006, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (“ACIP”) has recommended routine vaccination of adolescent girls at ages 11 or 12 years with three doses of HPV vaccine. The quadrivalent (“HPV4”) and bivalent (“HPV2”) vaccines both protect against HPV Types 16 and 18, which cause 70% of cervical cancers and the majority of other HPV-related cancers; HPV4 also protects against HPV Types 6 and 8, which cause 90% of genital warts. HPV4 is also licensed and recommended for males, so now all teens can be protected against a virus that causes cancer.

The NIS-Teen asked parents who did not intend to vaccinate their daughters in the next twelve months (23% of respondents) the main reason why their daughters would remain unvaccinated. The top five responses were: vaccine not needed (19%), vaccine not recommended (14%), vaccine safety concerns (13%), lack of knowledge about the vaccine or the disease (13%), and daughter is not sexually active (10%). These responses indicate gaps in parental understanding about the vaccine and why vaccination is recommended by age 13 years. Education of parents is the first area highlighted by the report that needs to be addressed to improve HPV vaccination coverage.

**Burstein continued,** “Parents need to know that HPV vaccination is safe, effective, and an important way to protect their children from cancer. Approximately 26,000 new cancers attributable to HPV occur in the U.S. each year, and this number could be greatly reduced if more parents would heed the vaccination message.”

The report also recommends that health-care providers increase the consistency and strength of HPV vaccination recommendations, and that missed vaccination opportunities need to be reduced.

Approximately 79 million persons in the United States are infected with HPV, and approximately 14 million will become newly infected each year<sup>1</sup>. Some HPV types can cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancer among women; penile cancer among men; and anal and throat cancers among both men and women. Other HPV types can cause genital warts. By increasing 3-dose HPV vaccination coverage to 80%, an estimated additional 53,000 cases of cervical cancer could be prevented over the lifetimes of those aged under twelve years. For every year that increases in coverage are delayed, another 4,400 women will go on to develop cervical cancer.

**For more information:**

On the Erie County Department of Health, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/health/>

On the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention HPV report, visit

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6229a4.htm?s\\_cid=mm6229a4\\_e](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6229a4.htm?s_cid=mm6229a4_e)

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<sup>1</sup> Satterwhite CL, Torrone E, Meites E, et al. Sexually transmitted infections among US women and men: prevalence and incidence estimates, 2008. Sex Transm Dis 2013;40:187-93.