



December 10, 2014

Re: HPV Vaccination Call to Action

Dear Immunization Provider:

Although the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine prevents cancer, four out of ten (8,497) adolescent girls and six out of ten (13,393) adolescent boys in North Dakota have not yet received a dose of this important vaccine. This letter serves as a call to action for all immunization providers to be sure to strongly recommend HPV vaccine to every eligible patient.

HPV vaccine is routinely recommended for all adolescents (girls and boys) at 11 to 12 years of age. The vaccine is most effective when administered prior to the start of sexual activity. Also, the immune system responds better to the vaccine at the 11 to 12 age range. Catch-up vaccination is routinely recommended for all adolescents ages 13 to 21. Catch-up vaccination is recommended for females through age 26. Vaccination is also recommended for high-risk males ages 22 to 26.

Starting in early 2015, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) will be sending postcards to parents of North Dakota adolescents who have not yet received any doses of HPV vaccine according to the North Dakota Immunization Information System (NDIIS). Additionally, the NDDoH will continue conducting quarterly recall of all adolescents ages 12 to 17 for Tdap, meningococcal conjugate, varicella, and HPV vaccines (if they have started the series). Over the next year, the NDDoH will also be conducting a statewide media campaign to promote HPV vaccination. The media campaign will include television, radio, and internet outreach. When parents call your clinic or present their children for vaccination, be sure to strongly recommend HPV vaccine, along with other adolescent vaccines. Research shows that HPV vaccine acceptance, like most vaccines, is influenced mostly by provider recommendation. The NDIIS has a vaccine forecaster that determines which vaccines the adolescent is due for. I recommend using the forecaster each and every time an adolescent visits your clinic.

Attached is a fact sheet outlining strategies that can be used to increase HPV vaccination rates at your facility.

The NDDoH is starting an HPV Task Force to address this very important issue. If you have interest in participating on this Task Force, please contact Molly Howell, immunization program manager, at mahowell@nd.gov.

Thank you for your time and attention in regard to this important topic. Together we can protect North Dakota children from developing cancer in the future. Please contact the NDDoH Immunization Program at 800.472.2180 for assistance or questions about HPV vaccine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Dwelle".

Terry Dwelle, M.D., M.P.H.T.M.
State Health Officer and Pediatric Infectious Disease Physician