

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Protect Your Preteens Today from HPV Cancers Tomorrow**

*Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Completion Rates Low*

**EAU CLAIRE, WI –SEPTEMBER 29, 2016.** Did you know that cancer prevention can be as simple as making sure your preteen receives the HPV vaccination series? HPV vaccination is the best way to prevent cervical cancer and many other types of cancer. Despite this information, HPV vaccine completion rates are alarmingly low in Wisconsin--only 3 in 10 girls and 1 in 10 boys ages 11-17. Completion rates are similar in Eau Claire County with a little over 3 in 10 boys and girls ages 11-17 completing the series of 3 vaccinations.

HPV is short for human papillomavirus. Every 20 minutes someone is diagnosed with cancer caused by the HPV virus. In the U.S. each year, there are about 17,600 women and 9,300 men affected by HPV cancers. In both women and men, HPV can cause anal cancer and mouth/throat (oropharyngeal) cancer. It can also cause cancers of the cervix, vulva and vagina in women, and cancer of the penis in men. Most of the HPV infections that cause these cancers could be prevented with vaccination.



The HPV vaccine is recommended for preteen girls and boys at age 11 or 12. Vaccinating at this age is important so preteens are protected from HPV long before they begin any type of sexual activity or before ever being exposed to the virus. HPV vaccines are given in 3 shots over 6 months.

“The HPV vaccines are safe, effective, and offer long-lasting protection against cancers caused by HPV.” says Andrea Kubarek, Public Health Nurse for Eau Claire City-County Health Department. Nearly 90 million doses have been distributed in the US since the vaccine was introduced, and no serious safety concerns have been linked to HPV vaccination. Possible side effects after HPV vaccination are generally mild and go away quickly, such as pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where the shot was given.

Please contact your medical provider or the CDC website for further information at <http://www.cdc.gov/STD/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm> .

The Eau Claire City-County Health Department and the Eau Claire Area School District are offering the HPV vaccine and other immunizations at no cost to children up to 19 years at several locations throughout the fall. For more information, visit <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/departments/health-department/immunization-clinics/school-clinics>. The Health Department also offers HPV vaccines to adults. **Eligibility criteria and/or costs may apply.** Please call 715-839-4718 for more information.

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