

# HPV Vaccination Talking Points in Preparation for 1<sup>st</sup> Dose Recall Letters

**Background:** In August, 2015, MDHHS began generating recall notification letters to over 600,000 parents of adolescents who have not yet started the HPV series. These recall letters have nothing to do with the vaccine manufacturing process, but rather they are letters indicating that a child is overdue for vaccines. The letters will be staggered in the mailing; half will be sent the first month and the remaining half will be sent during the second month (see provider letter outlining specific recall plans). Because of the sheer number of letters mailed, there may be an influx of calls to local health department immunization clinics and provider offices. To help you prepare for these calls, MDHHS has prepared some key messages and responses to common questions and concerns that arise surrounding HPV vaccine.

## Key Messages:

As much as possible, try to weave these key points into responses:

- HPV vaccine is safe.
- HPV vaccine is effective.
- HPV vaccine prevents cancer.
- HPV works best when given at 11-12 years of age.
- Vaccination protection against HPV viruses is long-lasting.
- HPV vaccination is supported and recommended by a number professional medical organizations.

## Common Concerns:

### ***Negativity about HPV Vaccine in General***

- *[Insert LHD name]*, along with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, are concerned about the health of Michiganders and that's why we support HPV vaccination.
- HPV vaccine is recommended by numerous health care-related organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, and many others.
- HPV vaccine is safe, it is effective, and it prevents cancer.

### ***Vaccine Safety – General Concerns***

- Vaccines are held to the highest safety standard, because they are given to healthy individuals, and HPV vaccine is no different.
- Numerous research studies have been conducted to make sure HPV vaccines were safe both before and after the vaccines were licensed.
- No serious safety concerns have been confirmed in the large safety studies that have been done since HPV vaccine became available in 2006.
- Since 2006, millions of doses of HPV vaccine have been distributed in the United States and in the 7 years of HPV vaccine safety studies , there has been no serious safety concerns identified.
- CDC and FDA have reviewed the safety information available to them for both HPV vaccines and have determined that they are both safe.
- Resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/vaccinesafety.html>

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## ***Vaccine Safety – Death***

- Some deaths among people who received an HPV vaccine have been reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System or [VAERS](#).
- This does not mean that the vaccine caused the death, only that the death occurred after the person got the vaccine.
- CDC and FDA review all available information on reports of death following all vaccines, including HPV vaccines.
- Between June 2006 and March 2014, when about 67 million doses of HPV vaccine had been given out in the U.S., VAERS received 96 reports of death after people received the Gardasil vaccine.
- Among the 96 reports of death, many could not be further studied because there was not enough information included in the report to verify that a person had died.
- In 47 of the reports, CDC verified that the person had died through review of medical records, autopsy reports, and death certificates.
- After careful review of every known case of death that has happened after Gardasil vaccination, CDC concluded:
  - There is no diagnosis that would suggest Gardasil caused the death
  - There is no pattern of death occurring with respect to time after vaccination
- Resource: [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/HPV/hpv\\_faqs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/HPV/hpv_faqs.html)

## ***Vaccine Safety - Venous Thromboembolism (Provider-Focused Messages)***

- Two post-licensure studies have reported the possible association between the quadrivalent HPV vaccine and venous thromboembolism (VTE).
- VTE is a risk factor for strokes and heart attacks.
- The first report, from VAERS, suffered from the lack of an appropriate control group.
- The second report, from the [Vaccine Safety Datalink](#), suffered from small numbers.
- In addition, it is hard to come up with a biological explanation for why a vaccine that consists of the L1 surface protein from four different strains of HPV (types 6, 11, 16, and 18) would cause something that is not a consequence of natural infection.
- To get around the problem of small numbers and inadequate control groups, Nikolai Scheller and coworkers in Denmark looked at the incidence of VTE in HPV recipients.
- Controlling for age, use of anticoagulants, pregnancy, and most importantly, use of contraceptives (which are known risk factor for VTE), these researchers studied 500,345 women who received the HPV vaccine, finding no association between the vaccine and VTE during the 42-days following vaccination.
- Clinicians should be reassured that HPV vaccine is not a cause of VTE.
- Resource: (Scheller NM, Pasternak B, Svanström H, Hviid A. [Quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus Vaccine and the Risk of Venous Thromboembolism](#). JAMA. 2014 July;312(2):187-8)
- Resource: [http://vec.chop.edu/professionals/vaccine-healthcare-providers/in-the-journals/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=in+the+journal&utm\\_content=zoster+vaccine&utm\\_campaign=vecupdatesJune2015#hpv-vaccine-vte](http://vec.chop.edu/professionals/vaccine-healthcare-providers/in-the-journals/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=in+the+journal&utm_content=zoster+vaccine&utm_campaign=vecupdatesJune2015#hpv-vaccine-vte)

## ***Vaccine Safety – Fertility***

- There are no data to suggest that getting HPV vaccine will have an effect on future fertility.
- In fact, getting vaccinated and protecting against cervical cancer can protect a woman's ability to get pregnant and have healthy babies.
- It is possible that the treatment of cervical cancer could leave a woman unable to have children.

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- It is also possible that treatment for cervical pre-cancer could put a woman at risk for problems with her cervix, which could cause preterm delivery or other problems.
- Resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/vac-faqs.htm>

### ***Vaccine Safety – Auto Immune Diseases***

- A two-year study of nearly 190,000 girls and women, found that HPV vaccine does not trigger autoimmune disorders such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes and multiple sclerosis.
- These findings offer some assurance that among a large and generalizable female population, no safety signal for autoimmune conditions was found following HPV4 vaccination in routine clinical use.
- Resource: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/240897.php>
- Resource: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24206418>

### ***Vaccine Safety – HIV***

- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- HPV is a different virus than [HIV](#) and [HSV](#) (herpes).
- HPV is so common that nearly all sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives.
- Resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv.htm>

### ***Vaccine Efficacy - General***

- The HPV vaccine works extremely well.
- In the four years after the vaccine was recommended in 2006, the amount of HPV infections in teen girls decreased by 56%.
- Research has shown that fewer teens are getting genital warts since HPV vaccines have been in use.
- In other countries such as Australia, research shows that HPV vaccine has already decreased the amount of pre-cancer of the cervix in women, and genital warts have decreased dramatically in both young women and men.
- Data from clinical trials and ongoing research tell us that the protection provided by HPV vaccine is long-lasting.
- Resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/index.html>

### ***Vaccine Efficacy – 11-12 Years of Age***

- HPV vaccine works best when given at 11-12 years of age.
- Preteens have a higher immune response to the HPV vaccine than older teens and young adults.
  - HPV vaccine produces the most infection-fighting cells or antibodies during the preteen years.
- While there is very little risk of exposure to HPV before age 13, the risk of exposure increases with age.
- Resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/infographic/hpv-cancer-prevention-8-5x11.pdf>

### ***Vaccine Ingredients***

- Some parents are concerned about the safety of ingredients found in vaccines, specifically aluminum, mercury, gelatin and antibiotics.

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- However, parents can be reassured that ingredients in vaccines are minuscule and necessary.
- Resource: <http://vec.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-safety/vaccine-ingredients/> (includes information on specific vaccine ingredients)

### ***Susceptibility to HPV Disease***

- HPV is serious and incredibly common.
- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States and in the world.
- 79 million Americans are currently infected with HPV and an additional 14 million Americans are infected every year.
- Half of those newly infected with HPV are between 15 and 24 years of age.
- Resource: [Prevent-HPV.org](http://Prevent-HPV.org) and [http://www.chop.edu/conditions-diseases/human-papilloma-virus-hpv/about#.Vczqw\\_lVhBc](http://www.chop.edu/conditions-diseases/human-papilloma-virus-hpv/about#.Vczqw_lVhBc)
- Resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv.htm>

### ***Seriousness of HPV Disease***

- HPV is serious and can cause cancer.
- While most people with HPV never develop symptoms or health problems, sometimes, HPV infections will persist and can cause health problems.
- Health problems that can be caused by HPV include:
  - Genital warts (warts on the genital areas)
  - Cervical cancer (cancer on a woman's cervix)
  - A type of head and neck cancer called oropharyngeal cancer (cancer in the back of throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils) in women and men
  - Anal cancer (cancer on the anus) in women and men
  - Vulvar and vaginal cancer (cancer on the vulva or vagina) in women
  - Penile cancer (cancer on the penis) in men
  - Infertility issues in both men and women
- Resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/vac-faqs.htm>

### ***Additional Resources***

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:

- HPV Vaccine Questions and Answers: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/vac-faqs.htm>
- HPV Vaccine Safety: [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/HPV/hpv\\_detailed.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/HPV/hpv_detailed.html)
- HPV Disease: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm>
- HPV Vaccine Resources for Health Care Professionals: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/for-hcp/hpv-resources.html>
- Tips and Time-savers for Talking with Parents about HPV Vaccine: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/for-hcp-tipsheet-hpv.pdf>
- Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Coverage Among Adolescents, 2007–2013, and Postlicensure Vaccine Safety Monitoring, 2006–2014 — United States: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6329a3.htm>
- Medscape CDC Expert Commentary [Common Questions about 9-Valent HPV Vaccine](http://Common Questions about 9-Valent HPV Vaccine).

Immunization Action Coalition:

- HPV Vaccine Ask the Experts: [http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/experts\\_hpv.asp](http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/experts_hpv.asp)

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: [Prevent-HPV.org](http://Prevent-HPV.org)