

Vermont “Start at 9” Campaign to Prevent HPV Cancers



September 2023

VT organizations that have endorsed starting the HPV vaccine series at age 9:

- American Cancer Society
- Bi-State Primary Care Association
- Central Vermont Medical Center
- Dartmouth Cancer Center
- Northern New England Clinical & Translational Research Network
- People’s Health and Wellness Clinic
- Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
- UVM Cancer Center
- UVM Children’s Hospital
- UVM Health Network
- Vermonters Taking Action Against Cancer
- Vermont Dental Hygienists’ Association
- Vermont State Dental Society

Dear Vermont Dental Health Care Provider,

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is estimated to cause about 37,300 new cases of cancer each year in the U.S.¹

We have an opportunity to eradicate HPV-associated cancers, yet too few people get the safe and effective vaccine. This is where you come in! HPV can cause six different cancers, and the vaccine prevents most diagnoses of these cancers including 81% of invasive cervical and 66% of oropharyngeal cancers.² **In Vermont, oral pharyngeal cancer is now the eighth most diagnosed cancer among males and females;** every year about 108 Vermonters are diagnosed with oral pharyngeal cancer, and 23 die from it.³ As dental health care providers, you have a unique and important role to play in increasing HPV vaccination rates in Vermont. The [State Oral Health Plan](#) specifically mentions increasing the use of the [HPV Dental Toolkit](#) to promote HPV vaccinations as part of dental practice.

A nine-valent HPV vaccine (HPV9) is available to protect against multiple strains, including the types that cause most cervical and other anogenital cancers, as well as some oropharyngeal cancers. **The HPV vaccine is approved for ages 9 years through 45 years for ALL GENDERS.** The American Cancer Society and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend vaccination beginning at age 9.

In Vermont, only 62% of adolescents aged 13-17 have completed the HPV vaccine.⁴ In rural communities, HPV vaccination rates are low, yet incidence and mortality rates of HPV-associated cancers are high.⁵ In Vermont, only 59% of rural youth have been vaccinated for HPV, compared to 67% of those living in urban areas.⁶

We must address this preventable public health issue. **You** can make a difference! **Provider recommendation for the HPV vaccine is considered the most effective determinant of vaccine uptake.**

The Vermont Department of Health Immunization Program provides vaccines at no cost to providers for all children and adults. The program is available to all enrolled providers through Vermont Child Vaccine Program (VCVP) and Vermont Adult Vaccine Program (VAVP).

Vermont is partnering with NH, CT, VA, WV, DC, PA, OH, MD, and DE, in a multi-state *Call to Action* to increase HPV vaccination through strong and consistent provider recommendations and the initiation of HPV vaccination starting at age 9. *HPV vaccination is cancer prevention!* Vermont’s Cancer Coalition, Vermonters Taking Action Against Cancer (VTAAC), is actively supporting this effort through its HPV Taskforce. For more information on how you can be involved in this initiative, please go to www.vtaac.org or email Coordinator@VTAAC.org.

Thank you for all that you do to improve the health of your patients. We appreciate your support for this important effort to prevent cancer by increasing HPV vaccination in Vermont.

Recommend starting HPV Vaccination at age 9!

Resources to support HPV vaccination recommendation by dental health care providers in Vermont



These Action Steps are taken from the [National HPV Vaccination Roundtable's Action Guide for Dental Health Care Providers](#). Please visit the website for details and resources.

Know your unique role	Action 1
Practice cancer prevention	Action 2
Refer patients for vaccinations	Action 3
Collaborate	Action 4
Engage your team	Action 5
Create a pro-immunization environment	Patient Education Tools

[Team Maureen HPV Dental toolkit](#)



REFERENCES

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- https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/stat_cancer_incidence_mortality_tables_2015_2019.pdf
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- Brandt HM, Vanderpool RC, Pilar M, Zubizarreta M, Stradtman LR. A narrative review of HPV vaccination interventions in rural communities. *Prev Med.* 2021 Apr;145:106407. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2020.106407. Epub 2021 Jan 1. PMID: 33388323.
- [IMR \(April 2023\)](#)