Letterhead

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** Contact Name

 Contact Phone Number

**Protect the Ones You Love: Prevent Cervical Cancer with**

**HPV Vaccinations and Pap Tests**

xxxx, MD (January 1, 2016) – Of all cancers that affect women, cervical cancer is one of the most preventable. Pap test screening finds cervical cancers and pre-cancers early and the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination can prevent boys and girls from being infected with the virus (HPV) that causes cervical cancer and other cancers. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene strongly recommends that women get Pap tests on a regular basis and that preteens receive HPV vaccinations in order to prevent cervical cancer.

“It is amazing that we have the power to protect our children and our mothers, aunts, and wives from cervical cancer,” said xxxx, xxxx of xxxx. “By vaccinating preteens against HPV and screening women for cervical cancer with the Pap test, we can prevent cervical cancer diagnoses right here in xxxx.”

In 2016 an estimated 220 women in Maryland will be told that they have cervical cancer. Seventy three Maryland women will die from the disease this year. In Maryland, the majority of women aged 21 to 65 years, about 88 percent, have had a Pap test in the past three years. However, younger women (aged 21 to 29 years) and non-black minority women are not getting screened as often as their counterparts. The HPV vaccine is highly recommended for girls and boys, 11 or 12 years old (and up until age 26 for those who have not been vaccinated yet). However, here in Maryland, only 39 percent of girls have had all three doses of the vaccine. Only about 25 percent of boys have been fully vaccinated.

There are many options for obtaining and paying for Pap tests and the HPV vaccine. Health insurance can cover this cancer screening and vaccine. For example, lower income women 40 to 64 years old who do not have health insurance or who have out of pocket costs, may be eligible for a Pap test at no cost. Call the xxxx at xxxx to discuss the eligibility requirements. Medicaid enrollment through [Maryland Health Connection](https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/) is available year-round, if Marylanders qualify.

The xxxx Breast and Cervical Cancer Program works to promote cervical cancer screening and is dedicated to decreasing cervical cancer mortality rates in Maryland. For more information, call xxxxxxxxxx.

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