



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local Newspaper
From: Catrina Weber, Health Educator
RE: Cervical Cancer Vaccine
Release Date: January 2009

NEW VACCINE TO PREVENT CANCER

Women in their lifespan have a 1 in 142 chance of developing cervical cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates that there will be 11,150 new cases of cervical cancer in 2007, and an estimated 33% will die from it. In Michigan alone, the estimates are closer to 400 new cases of cervical cancer. This type of cancer typically has no symptoms until abnormal cervical cells become cancerous and invade tissues. For this reason, pap smears are crucial to diagnosing and treating this disease early; however for some women this may all ready be too late. There is, however, a vaccine that will aid in eliminating cervical cancer caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), more commonly know as genital warts.

Although this virus is commonly known as a sexually transmitted disease, that belief is somewhat misleading. Perfectly healthy women who have had only one sexual partner, may still contract HPV, and studies show that 70% of cervical cancer cases are caused by this virus.

For this reason, the vaccine Gardasil is being offered to girls and women between the ages of 11 and 26. This will hopefully target an audience that has yet to become sexually active, thus protecting them from the virus before they are potentially exposed. Gardasil is administered in a series of three shots and costs approximately \$360 for the series. Some insurance companies will cover this cost, but if yours does not, contact your family doctor or local health department to ask if you qualify for the vaccine for children program (VFC). This program covers many vaccines for children who are under the age of 19.

This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon.

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