

NEWS

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Department of Public Health and Human Services

www.dphhs.mt.gov

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Contact: Jon Ebelt, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, (406) 444-0936
Chuck Council, Communications Specialist, DPHHS, (406) 444-4391

Montana Immunization Program to focus MT TeenVax campaign on cancer prevention

Department of Public Health and Human Services officials said today that many people may be unaware that one of the most common causes of cervical cancer can be prevented with a vaccine.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the cause of nearly all cervical cancers. In addition, HPV causes 20,000 other cases of non-cervical cancer each year in the United States. To help protect against cervical and other HPV-related cancers, public health and private immunization providers are working together to increase HPV vaccination coverage rates.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 2016 National Immunization Survey, only a little more than half of Montana parents/guardians are choosing to get the HPV vaccine for their children. The CDC recommends the HPV vaccine for adolescents as young as 11 years of age when they are scheduled to receive vaccines for pertussis or meningitis or during other medical visits. Teens or young adults that may have missed that window can still receive the vaccine and are encouraged to talk with their medical provider.

While the CDC survey showed room for improvement, Montana did show recent improvement in the percentage of young women starting the 2-dose series. However, the number of boys starting the series remained about the same. Although many of these teens and young adults are getting their first dose of HPV vaccine, not all are completing the vaccination series.

"While Montana continues to improve coverage levels for the HPV vaccine, we are still below the national average," said DPHHS Director, Sheila Hogan.

In 2018, the Montana Immunization Program's MT TeenVax campaign to promote teen vaccines will focus on HPV, the cancers it causes, and the HPV vaccine that helps to prevent them. The campaign will include providing resources and information to healthcare professionals, parents, and teens to increase awareness.

"It is important that Montana's children be protected against these cancers," Hogan said. "Now is a great time to check your child's immunization record and see if they have received all the

recommended vaccines. If you have questions about any of the vaccines, talk to your healthcare provider.”

For more information about HPV and the other adolescent vaccines, go to
www.immunization.mt.gov.