

MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD

A Chapter Leader's Guide to Media Outreach



NCCC

National Cervical Cancer Coalition
A program of the American Sexual Health Association



As a chapter leader for the National Cervical Cancer Coalition, you have an important platform. In this role, you are viewed as a voice of authority and you have the opportunity to share vital prevention messages about cervical cancer prevention to a broad audience.

This guide offers you information and advice on using this platform effectively, with guidance on reaching out to traditional media, taking advantage of social media, and selecting the best messages to share. You'll also find examples of successful efforts by your fellow chapter leaders.

Thank you for volunteering your valuable time and using your voice to promote cervical cancer prevention!



Reaching Out to the Media

Media are always interested in fresh content, especially if you can provide a local angle or “hook” for outlets in your town. Reach out and make them aware not only about cervical cancer, but the impact in your state and what your chapter is doing in the community.

Resources to contact include:

- Newspapers
- Radio, especially local talk shows
- Public access channels
- College media: if there are colleges and universities in your town, chances are they have a newspaper and radio stations

Cervical Health Awareness Month in January is the ideal time to gain media coverage, as you can capitalize on the increased attention to the issue this month. However, there are many other opportunities throughout the year, such as Women’s Health Week in May and Gynecological Cancer Awareness Month in September (see the calendar on the next page for more). All of these national observances are ideal times for you to offer relevant content to your local media and propose pertinent article ideas. For example:

- *Five ways to brighten a cancer patient’s day.*
- *Seven questions you should never ask a cancer patient*
- *Eight tips to stress-proof your body while going through cancer treatment*

An excellent way to capture the attention of the media and promote messages of prevention is to **share your personal story**. Many chapter leaders are cervical cancer survivors themselves or have friends or family members who have been affected by cervical cancer. Your story can provide a compelling framework for educating people about cervical cancer and the importance of vaccination and screening.

The image displays two screenshots of media articles. The left screenshot is from 'The Southern' website, dated August 5, 2012, with the headline 'Young mom raising cervical cancer awareness'. It features a photo of Francine Sabens, a pregnant woman in a green shirt, and a caption stating she started a local chapter of the National Cervical Cancer Coalition. The right screenshot is from 'MIDIA PLANET' website, titled 'Surviving Cervical Cancer: Supporting Others Helps the Healing'. It features a photo of Gail Powell and a quote: 'The hardest thing was knowing I wasn't going to have the option of carrying a child and giving birth.' The article text describes her diagnosis at age 31 and her role in leading the National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) in Bloomfield, MI.

Chapter Leaders Gail Powell (left) of Michigan and Francine Sabens (above) of Illinois were both subjects of personal profile articles where they shared their stories and described their efforts to raise awareness and help others.

Take Advantage of National Observances

Cervical Health Awareness Month in January is obviously the most significant month for NCCC, providing us a clear and compelling opportunity to bring awareness to our cause and your chapters. However, there are many more opportunities throughout the year that you can use to frame your message and bring attention to your work locally.

Below is a list of many national observances that have some relevance to our work. You can use some of these events as opportunities to reach out to local media, as reporters like to find a local angle when covering a larger issue.

| | |
|---|---|
| JANUARY Cervical Health Awareness Month | FEBRUARY National Condom Month (with National Condom Day celebrated on February 14) |
| MARCH | APRIL STI Awareness Month National Public Health Week* |
| MAY National Women's Health Week* | JUNE National Cancer Survivors Day* Men's Health Month |
| JULY | AUGUST Immunization Awareness Month National Health Center Week* |
| SEPTEMBER Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month Sexual Health Month | OCTOBER National Primary Care Week* National Health Education Week* |
| NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |

*Dates change annually

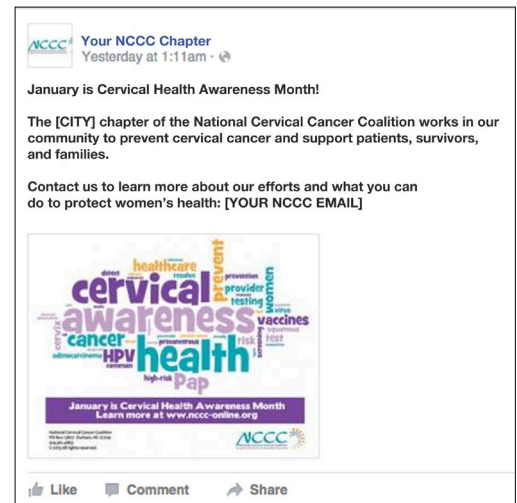
Be Proactive

Increasingly it's smart to **use social media channels** to reach newspapers, tv/radio, and bloggers. You can do this year round and especially during the national observations listed on the calendar on the previous page.

- Follow or “like” local media on their Twitter and Facebook pages.
- Tweet messages to them and post on their Facebook page to let them know about your chapter.
- Offer to share information with them especially during January/April/September (see sample Twitter and Facebook posts on this page).
- Keep your own social media channels robust: add content at least weekly and feel free to share/retweet NCCC content.

You can also use more traditional means of getting in touch with media:

- Write a letter to the editor to promote cervical cancer awareness.
- Public Service Announcements (see the NCCC website for written versions you can use, as well as the samples in this booklet).
- NCCC press release: personalize with your chapter information (see a sample provided in this booklet).



How to Write an Op-Ed

An **op-ed** is an article run by newspapers and magazines that expresses the author's opinion and typically has a call to action for readers (such as encouraging them to have a Pap test!). Op-eds are brief essays (usually 650-750 words and no more than 800). They normally focus on one idea that makes a larger argument.

1. First, **determine the message** you want to get across and what you want your op-ed to achieve. Do you want people to take action after reading? Limit yourself to just one message and try not to pack too much information.
2. **Choose your target publication** carefully. If you are trying to reach a lot of people, choose the paper with the largest circulation. If you are trying to reach a particular legislator, choose a paper in the targeted district.
3. Read the publication you are submitting to. **Familiarize yourself with the style and tone** of the publication and the types of op-eds it typically runs.
4. **Contact the publication** for information on length criteria, how to submit your op-ed, how long publishing takes, and any other helpful information.
5. When writing, **be direct and clear**. Appeal to the reader's self interest. Link your issue to a current news event. Use real life stories that engage the reader. This has more impact than rambling off statistics).
6. **Choose your words carefully** and do not use personal attacks. If appropriate, use humor. A choose a catchy title helps.

Lioness HOME MARKETING MONEY START UP LEADERSHIP TECHNOLOGY CURRENT ISSUE NEWS RESOURCES WRITE SHOP

Cervical Cancer Survivor Fights To Get More Life-saving Tests And Vaccines To The Women Who Need Them Most

Posted on December 22, 2014 by **Natasha Clark**

Approximately 12,000 American women will learn they have cervical cancer this year, and of those, 4,000 will die from an advanced form of the disease. January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and Tonya Renee, a cervical cancer and endometriosis survivor herself, is focused on educating women about the importance of the pap test as a screening tool for cervical cancer and about vaccines that can further reduce the burden of this devastating disease.


"The launch of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) means that health care is becoming a reality for millions who were previously shut out of the system," Renee, the new National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) Washington DC chapter leader, said.

She pointed out that under ACA, insurance plans are required to provide access to cervical cancer screening, including pap tests and, when appropriate, human papillomavirus (HPV) tests with no co-pay. Cervical cancer is most often diagnosed in poor women; the true tragedy of the disease is that cervical cancer screening tests and vaccines exist that prevent virtually every case.

"We have a golden opportunity to provide more life-saving tests and vaccines to the women who need them most. We invite everyone to take a stand involved, and join our efforts," Renee said. Her personal motto and chapter tagline is, "Initiating the Dialogue, Creating the Outlet, Providing Support, Delivering the information needed to STOP the spread of the HPV."

Renee was diagnosed with months to live in 2005 after years of abnormal pap tests. Now after having a total hysterectomy, she is fully recovered and is on a mission to encourage women to contact their health care providers to schedule a pap test to check for cervical cancer. While routine pap testing is the best means of detecting cervical cancer at an early stage, vaccines have the potential to protect women from the disease by targeting cancer-causing types of HPV. Two forms of the virus, HPV 16 and HPV 18, account for more than 70 percent of all cervical cancer cases. Some medical experts believe that through successful education, screening, and vaccination programs for women, they will have the potential to nearly eliminate cervical cancer in the U.S.

Throughout the month of January the NCCC-DC Chapter will be sponsoring and attending many events in an effort to raise awareness. As a new chapter, the NCCC-DC's goal is to be visible and available to provide information about HPV and support to cervical cancer patients and their caregivers, community leaders, and parents. On January 31, 2015, the NCCC-DC Chapter will host a Chapter Launch & Fundraising Event in Washington, D.C., and they would like to invite the public to attend and participate in their silent auction or sponsor a need.



wp-content/uploads/2014/12/renee-2.jpg information regarding HPV and its

Tonya Renee

Washington DC chapter leader Tonya Renee Griggs promotes prevention messages while sharing her own survivor story. Hartford, CT chapter leader Amy Rodriguez's experience with cervical cancer provides the frame an article on staying healthy after cancer treatment.

Checkup

Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Lead Medical Editor

Read **What Are the Symptoms of Cervical Cancer?**, an article at WebMD.com. **LEARN HOW ON PAGE 4**

SCAN HERE FOR MORE

LIVING WELL

CERVICAL CANCER

TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY AFTER TREATMENT

By Christina Boufis

WebMD CANCER SPECIAL

Amy Rodriguez was 42 when she was diagnosed with cervical cancer. "I had been having a little bit of light pain in my lower left side, in the area of the ovaries, and some heavy bleeding, which was unusual," says the mother of two. Rodriguez went to see her gynecologist and had a Pap test. When she found out it was cancer, "my life just flipped upside down," she says. "I've never had any health issues or problems."

Fortunately, cervical cancer, most often caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), is extremely curable in the early stages, says B.J. Rimmel, MD, gynecologic oncologist in the



at increased risk of vaginal problems, like narrowing or dryness, so ask your doctor about physical therapy, such as using dilators, that may be appropriate.

Find ways to de-stress. Studies show that relaxation practices like yoga and meditation may help reduce stress, anxiety, and fatigue in those who've had cancer. "Whatever people enjoy doing and is restorative is generally going to be health-promoting," Rimmel says. Other ways to de-stress? Reach out for support. "Good support groups are out there, especially for women who've had complications from treatment."

Eat healthy foods. "Focus on fruits and vegetables," Rimmel says. Limit foods that aren't as healthy, like processed sugars and grilled or processed meats, she adds. Indeed, one study showed that a diet rich in fiber and high in fruits and vegetables was linked to a reduced risk of cervical cancer, though more research is needed to understand the connection.

says. "Women who have some pelvic pain or discomfort may find it's alleviated by the water," she adds. Try water-based aerobics or swimming.

Ask about physical therapy. "Talk to your doctor about vaginal health," Rimmel says. "Women who've had cervical cancer may be

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

1. What are the chances of cervical cancer recurrence?
2. What lifestyle changes should I make?
3. How often should I have regular checkups?
4. What about new approaches to prevention or treatment?
5. How does my having had cervical cancer affect my close family members?

Women who have some pelvic pain or discomfort may find it's alleviated by the water.

Women's Cancer Program at the Cedars-Sinai Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute.

Following diagnosis and treatment, what can you do to stay well? Rimmel has these tips:

Quit right now. "Smoking is a big problem," Rimmel says. "Take steps to quit, and 'make sure you're not around smokers,'" she adds.

"The nicotine and many substances in cigarettes [appear] to activate HPV and cause it to persist, which may result in worsening disease."

Consider a water sport. While exercise is important for health overall, find something that allows you to move comfortably without pain, especially if you've had extensive treatment, Rimmel

What to Say

Once you have the attention of the media, what do you want to say? It's important be to be prepared with your talking points about cervical cancer as well as information about your chapter's work and future events in your community.

- Promote your chapter and the work you are doing in your community
- Promote NCCC and tout your connection to the national organization
- Give a local angle as a hook: what is your chapter doing? Note cervical cancer rates in your state (see www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/statistics/state.htm to search by state)
- Make sure emails you send have your full contact info including social media links (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Your story is powerful: use it to promote screening, HPV vaccines, and the need for support.

Use the **Talking Points** section to get your points across. One important message to make clear is that HPV is common and virtually all sexually active people have one or more HPV infections in their lifetimes. We want to get across that **having HPV is normal**, which is why the prevention measures of screening and vaccines are so important. Surveys indicate that understanding just how common HPV goes a long way to overcoming embarrassment about the sexual health aspects of the virus and related cancers

Promote Your Events—and Your Message

Every chapter event is an opportunity for media coverage. Your event gives you the opportunity to promote not only your chapter's activities, but to promote important cervical cancer prevention messages as well.

While you can likely find opportunities to list and promote your event in local media and websites, you can also take the opportunity to contact local reporters to get coverage of the event, your chapter, and our mission.

NCCC Kickoff Cocktails

The halls of **St. Agnes Academy** were teeming with people as the **National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC)** held its inaugural event to begin fund-raising for the organization's newly formed **Memphis chapter**. The chapter was established in memory of **Lauren Wright Hobbs**, a 2002 graduate of **St. Agnes** who lost her battle with cervical cancer in the fall of 2013. Serving as the chapter's leader (president) is **Elaine Wright**, sister-in-law to Hobbs, with **Donna Wright**, Hobbs' mother, serving as the co-leader. The cocktail buffet offered guests shrimp bruschetta from **The Half Shell**, along with barbecue sliders from **One & Only BBQ**. **Frost Bake Shop** and **Nothing Bundt Cakes** provided their signature deserts and **Southwind Wine & Spirits** provided the refreshments. The evening included a testimonial from three-time cervical cancer survivor **Laura Fletcher** and an educational presentation by one of Laura's former doctors, **Dr. Joseph T. Santoso** of **The West Cancer Center**. The organization will be fund-raising for research to find a cure, providing education to the local community and offering patient and family support.

Story and Photos by Emily Adams Keplinger



Dr. Joseph Santoso, Donna Wright, Elaine Wright, Laura Fletcher, Brad Wright and Jimmy Wright

NorthJersey.com

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NORTHJERSEY.COM : TOWNS

'Santa Night' to bring cervical cancer awareness to Montclair area

DECEMBER 2, 2014 LAST UPDATED: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2014, 9:17 PM

BY ANDREW SEGEDIN

STAFF WRITER | THE MONTCLAIR TIMES

PAGES: 1 2 > DISPLAY ON ONE PAGE Print



STAFF PHOTO BY ADAM ANIK BUY THIS PHOTO
Courtney Coffin of Cedar Grove, left, and Sandy Cowan Fischer of Montclair sing carols at The Office on Bloomfield Avenue in Montclair during a past "Santa Night."

Through the past six years, in preparation for traveling the globe early Christmas

The Tennessee (Memphis) chapter earned a write up after its successful kickoff event, an excellent way to introduce a new chapter to the community. The New Jersey (Montclair) chapter's annual Santa Night event was the feature of a local news story, promoting both the event and the chapter's local efforts over the past several years.

Talking Points

HPV is common

The vast majority of sexually active individuals will have one or more HPV infections in their lifetime (some experts put the estimates as high as 75%-80%).

ANYONE can have HPV

Anyone is at risk for HPV, regardless of their number of sexual partners. HPV is NOT something that happens because someone is promiscuous: If you have HPV, do you know what that makes you? Normal!

Cervical cancer is virtually always preventable with appropriate screening and vaccination

Screening Tests (Pap tests and HPV tests)

- Most cases of cervical cancer occur in women who have either never had a Pap test or have gone 5-10 years without one.
- Women should start screening with the Pap test at age 21. (Screening is not recommended for women under age 21.)
- Starting at age 30, women have three options available for screening:
 - A Pap test alone every three years
 - Co-testing with a Pap and HPV test, every five years
 - An HPV test alone, every five years
- An HPV test was approved for use with women age 25 and older for primary cervical cancerscreening, followed by a Pap test for women with certain results.
- Pap tests detect abnormal cell changes to the cervix that, if not watched or cared for, sometimes lead to cancer. HPV tests actually find the DNA of the HPV virus directly. Coupled with a Pap, HPV tests allow healthcare providers to identify which women are at greatest risk for cervical cancer and determine how best to care for them.
- What about the “annual Pap” that we’ve done for so long? Cervical cancer typically develops slowly over many years, so experts no longer recommend getting checked annually for most women. Most cases of HPV and abnormal cervical cells are cleared away naturally by the immune system, so testing more often than necessary tends to lead to follow-up procedures (like biopsies) that most women don’t need.

Vaccines

- The HPV vaccine Gardasil 9® covers the high-risk HPV types that cause approximately 90% of HPV-related cervical cancers along with the vast majority of HPV-related vulvar, vaginal, and anal cancers. The vaccine also covers a pair of low-risk types, HPV 6 and 11, found with about 90% of genital warts.
- The vaccine is available for males and females ages 9-26. CDC recommends routine HPV vaccination for all boys and girls beginning at ages 11-12.
- After millions of doses given globally for more than 10 years, no cause and effect link has been determined between HPV vaccination and serious adverse events (side effects).
- HPV vaccine safety is rigorously monitored in national programs. If any such link existed, it would have been turned up long ago.

- ✓ Prepare your key messages and remember to speak simply.
- ✓ Determine your target audience and prepare for this audience.
- ✓ Avoid technical or scientific jargon. Put numbers and statistics into context.
- ✓ Prepare sound bites/ simple statements to describe research/views.

I am Advocacy: Lauren Whiteside

POSTED BY SHERILYN PHILLIPS ON JUNE 22, 2015 AT 12:00 PM

I am Advocacy

"This is cancer prevention. This is the one cancer we do have a vaccine for."

That is how Lauren Whiteside responded when asked about the importance of educating people about the HPV vaccine. Currently, South Carolina has one of the highest rates of cervical cancer deaths in America if more people received the HPV vaccination.

To this day, fifty percent of South Carolinian girls and twenty percent of South Carolinian boys are vaccinated. Because of these alarming statistics, Whiteside has been championing cervical cancer prevention.

Whiteside began the South Carolina chapter of the National Cervical Cancer Coalition in January 2011, where she is today is an incredible one. Before starting the South Carolina chapter of the National Cervical Cancer Coalition, Whiteside had a couple of operations to remove precancerous lesions. This sparked her interest in cervical cancer. While doing some research online, she came across the National Cervical Cancer Coalition and decided to contribute to the organization by volunteering her time, but soon found out that South Carolina already has a cervical cancer chapter. So she took the plunge and began a chapter herself. She has been an advocate for HPV education ever since.

Since she created the South Carolina chapter in January of 2011, she has been focused on education and prevention. One of the things that motivates her to do the work she does is the prevalence of cervical cancer and the HPV vaccine. Unfortunately, there are many people in the state of South Carolina who do not know about the HPV vaccine and cervical cancer.



I am Advocacy

"I've changed my mind about the HPV vaccine." For Whiteside, success is defined as a small one or a big one.

"One year I was on a college campus and one college freshman told me I should get the HPV vaccine because she had inaccurate information I have encountered makes me want to push forward, making in the past couple of years."

Ever since the South Carolina chapter was created, Whiteside has dedicated her time to educate and create an environment where people can make informed decisions based on facts. She hopes that every person who receives the vaccine will be one more person who will not have cervical cancer.

There is a stigma associated with cervical cancer, more so in the South. Many people are not comfortable talking about it, but she has not let that stop her. A mother went up to the panel, a mother went up to the panel, a mother went up to the panel.



South Carolina chapter leader Lauren Whiteside blogged about how her personal experience with cervical cancer fuels her work as an advocate in her state. New York City chapter leaders Kawanza Billy and Michele Appel Prigo have appeared on local radio to promote cervical cancer prevention and their chapter activities.

NCCC-Specific Talking Points

- The National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) was founded in 1996 as a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to serving women with, or at risk for, cervical cancer and HPV disease along with their families, friends, and caregivers. In 2011, NCCC merged with American Sexual Health Association (ASHA), a nonprofit with a long history of educating and raising awareness on sexual health issues.
- NCCC has thousands of members around the world, and numerous local chapters across the U.S. NCCC local chapters hold events throughout the year—with a special focus on Cervical Health Awareness Month in January—to raise awareness about HPV and cervical cancer prevention in their local communities. [Make sure to include information about your chapter and activities!]
- The NCCC website—www.nccc-online.org—has free materials that educate about HPV and cervical health, including cervical cancer as well as information on cervical cancer screening and prevention.

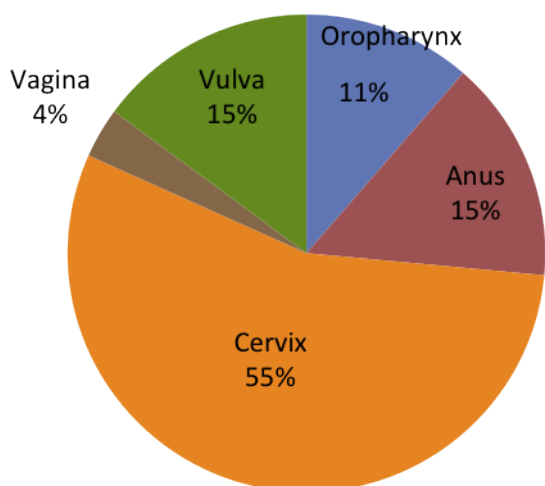
HPV FAQ

“What can HPV cause?”

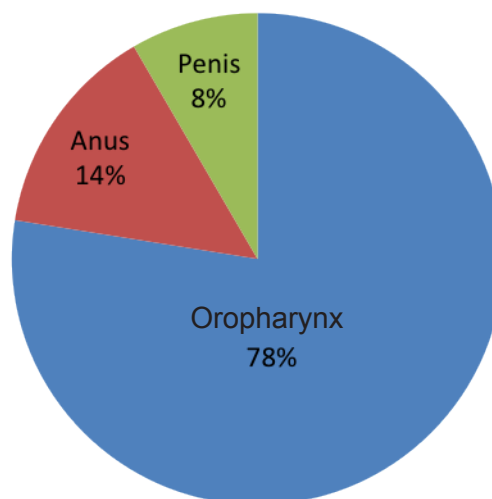
Most cases of HPV have no symptoms and are harmless. This isn't always the case, of course, and some low-risk HPV types can cause anal or genital warts.

Some other high-risk HPV types are associated with cancers of the cervix, vagina, vulva, anus, and penis. These HPV types are also found in an increasing number of head and neck cancers (often affecting the area around the tonsils). It should be noted that even high-risk types of HPV are seldom dangerous and related cancers are very uncommon.

Women (N=20,413)



Men (N=12,002)



“Why isn't HPV tested for routinely?”

Most infections clear on their own and do not lead to disease. So detecting HPV would not help determine who is at risk for outcomes of HPV.

“Does having HPV mean my partner cheated?”

HPV diagnosed within a relationship should not be taken as an indication of infidelity. While most sexually active people have HPV at some point, it is rarely possible to determine when and from whom any particular HPV infection was acquired.

“Should my partner be examined?”

Sex partners of persons with diagnosed HPV infections do not need to be examined and do not need to seek medical care unless they notice an abnormality, such as genital warts. If the partner is female, she should have regular cervical cancer screening starting at age 21.

“Will I always have HPV?”

The virus is usually harmless and in most cases will clear naturally over a few months. There's no way to know how long an individual may be able to transmit the virus to new partners, though, which is frustrating.

Your Chapter Media Kit

A media kit can be a helpful tool for you when working with local media and you can compile this with resources readily available from NCCC*. Your media kit can be a simple pocket folder that you fill with information that will help the reporter develop her or his story. Media kit components may include:

- A **chapter introduction letter**, with information about your local chapter (when it was founded, recent events) as well as your contact information.
- **Background information** on NCCC.
- **Fact sheets** on HPV and cervical cancer prevention, including HPV screening and vaccines.
- A **bio sheet** on you and your role as chapter leader. You may want to share some details of your personal story and your interest in promoting cervical cancer awareness.
- A press release or flyer, if you are promoting a current observance (e.g. Cervical Health Awareness Month) or chapter event (e.g. an appearance at a local health fair).



Claudia Porras (El Paso, TX) discusses her work with cervical cancer patients as her inspiration while Allegra Woodard (Prince William County, Virginia) shares her challenging road to recovery from cervical cancer.

Radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for Cervical Health Awareness Month

SAMPLE

15 SECOND PSA

FOR RELEASE:

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

[Your name]

[Your phone number and/or email]

PSA, 15 SECONDS:

Did you know that January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and that cervical cancer is preventable?

Make sure you and women in your life receive the HPV vaccine, and are screened regularly with a Pap and HPV test. Ask your health care provider today.

For more information on how to prevent cervical cancer visit www.nccc-online.org.

30 SECOND PSA

FOR RELEASE:

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

[Your name]

[Your phone number and/or email]

PSA, 30 SECONDS:

JANUARY IS CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH.

You can prevent cervical cancer! Regular screening with Pap tests can detect cell changes before cancer develops. If you are age 30 or over, your health care provider may recommend that you have an HPV test along with your Pap.

Cervical cancer is caused by a common virus called HPV. A vaccine is now available that provides protection against HPV and can help prevent cervical cancer. Women who receive the HPV vaccine must remember that they should continue having regular Pap and HPV tests.

Remember to vaccinate early, get screened when recommended by your health care provider.

For more information on how to prevent cervical cancer visit www.nccc-online.org.

Media Contact:
Chapter Leader Name
NCCC _____ Chapter
City, State Zip
Email

For Immediate Release
January 1, 20xx

January is Cervical Health Month
***Cervical Cancer Prevention Requires Both Quality Healthcare and
Comfort in Talking about Sexual Health***

[YOUR CITY AND STATE] —The National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC), a program of the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA), recognizes January as Cervical Health Awareness Month and urges every woman to make a New Year’s resolution to get screened for cervical cancer!

Each year in the U.S. more than 13,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and more than 4,000 die as a result. Cervical cancer is a profound health equity issue: in both the U.S. and abroad, the disease is linked strongly with poverty and lack of access to medical care, a fact all the more frustrating because screening tests (Pap tests and HPV tests) and vaccines exist that give us the capacity to essentially eliminate the disease.

Through chapters and volunteers across the United States and Canada, NCCC is dedicated to educating and supporting women with, or at risk for, cervical cancer. [CHAPTER LEADER NAME], leader of the NCCC’s [NAME OF CHAPTER], says it’s crucial to spread the word that cervical cancer can in fact be prevented. “No woman should ever have to face this diagnosis – we can stop this disease in its tracks, and the key is to make sure all women have access to life-saving tests and vaccines.”

Access to these life-saving tools is crucial, and ASHA/NCCC President Lynn Barclay says we have programs in place to help. “Provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) require insurance plans to cover cervical cancer screening tests at zero cost to women,” she says. Barclay also points out that HPV vaccines, which are available for both males and females, are covered by the vast majority of health insurance plans. “Ensuring greater access to these tests and vaccines is not only the right thing to do, but also a wise, efficient way to spend our healthcare dollars,” she says.

Changes to the field—including expanded use of HPV tests and the fact most women are no longer recommended to have an annual Pap—means that education and outreach are more important than ever. “The landscape constantly changes and so must we. When it comes to sexual and reproductive health, we should be comfortable in our own skin and have the confidence to seek the care and support we need. I urge every woman to talk with her health care provider about Pap and HPV tests.”

For the full array of Cervical Health Awareness Month materials, including social media resources and free downloads, visit the ASHA and NCCC websites.

Founded in 1996, the National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) is a program of ASHA and is a growing coalition of people coping with cervical cancer and HPV-related issues. The coalition primarily consists of women, family members, friends and caregivers, but also includes women’s groups, cytotechnologists, healthcare providers, bio-tech companies, cancer researchers, and organizations providing cervical cancer detection programs. NCCC websites are www.nccc-online.org and www.gjahc.org.

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SAMPLE



NCCC
National Cervical Cancer Coalition
A program of the American Sexual Health Association

