

March 2025

Dear Healthcare Partner,

Start Recommending HPV Vaccination at Age 9

Join us as we strive for the elimination of certain vaccine-preventable HPV-related cancers and diseases. With the HPV vaccine, you have the power to protect your 9- to 12-year-old patients from six types of cancer. The American Cancer Society (ACS), ACS National HPV Vaccination Roundtable, and American Academy of Pediatrics all recommend initiating HPV vaccination at age 9.

In Pennsylvania, only 68.7% of adolescents age 13-17 are fully vaccinated against HPV-associated cancers.¹ In rural communities, HPV vaccination rates are low, yet incidence and mortality rates of HPV-associated cancers are high.² The HPV vaccination rate for Pennsylvania adolescents living in non-urban geographic locations drops to an alarmingly low rate of 48.7% compared to the 95.7% for ≥ 1 dose MenACWY.³

The pandemic depleted several years of progress on HPV cancer prevention, and catching up on missed doses is critical to protect Pennsylvania residents from future cancers. Nationally, approximately 27% of men and 53.6% of women between the ages of 18–26 are vaccinated.⁴

The Healthy People 2030 goal is 80% coverage for HPV vaccination. We are committed to achieving this together.

Initiating the HPV vaccine series at age 9 offers many potential benefits, including:

1. More time for completion of the series on time by age 13
2. Strong immune response to the HPV vaccine
3. Increased likelihood of vaccinating prior to first HPV exposure
4. Fewer questions about sexual activity by parents and guardians
5. Fewer requests for only vaccines that are “required” for school
6. Fewer shots per visit
7. Highly acceptable to systems, providers, and parents

The ACS National HPV Vaccination Roundtable has developed resources to help organizations begin recommending HPV vaccination at age 9. Please review these resources:

- [Why Age 9? Fact Sheet](#)
- [Start at 9 Toolkit](#)
- [CDC Parent-facing 2024 Recommended Vaccinations for Children 7–18 Years Old](#)

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/teenvaxview/data-reports/index.html>

⁴ Brandt HM, Vanderpool RC, Pilar M, Zubizarreta M, Stradtman LR. A narrative review of HPV vaccination interventions in rural U.S. communities. *Prev Med*. 2021 Apr;145:106407. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2020.106407. Epub 2021 Jan 1. PMID: 33388323.

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/teenvaxview/data-reports/index.html>

³ McElfish PA, Narcisse MR, Felix HC, Cascante DC, Nagarsheth N, Teeter B, Faramawi MF. Race, Nativity, and Sex Disparities in Human Papillomavirus Vaccination among Young Adults in the USA. *J Racial Ethn Health Disparities*. 2021 Oct;8(5):1260-1266. doi: 10.1007/s40615-020-00886-5. Epub 2020 Oct 8. PMID: 33033889; PMCID: PMC9753349.

- [Video Abstracts on Age 9 Playlist](#)
- [HPV Vaccination Starting at Age 9 Journal Supplement](#)
- [HPV Vaccination Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [HPV Vaccination Communications Toolkit](#)
- [Start HPV Vaccination at Age 9 Initiative](#)

Inviting patients in for annual well-child visits is key to prevention and well-being. We can prevent cancer through vaccination, starting at age 9 and completing the series no later than age 13. *HPV vaccination is cancer prevention!* Thank you for all that you do to care for your patients.

[Vaccines for Children Program \(VFC\)](#), provides free HPV vaccines for all kids enrolled in Pennsylvania Medicaid or who have no insurance. The HPV vaccine is covered by nearly all insurance plans for patients ages 9 through 45⁵ (the HPV vaccine is recommended for adults ages 27 through 45 years old based on shared clinical decision-making per the CDC's Adult Immunization Schedule).

We also want to remind you of another vaccine that you can promote in your practice to prevent cancer. The hepatitis B (HBV) vaccine is recommended for all age groups to prevent HBV infection – the world's leading cause of liver cancer. HBV vaccine is recommended for all newborns at birth and unvaccinated children aged <19 years old. HBV vaccine is required for kindergarten enrollment in PA. Most people who are infected have no symptoms until it progresses to serious liver disease. This can be prevented with highly effective vaccines. Learn more about the efforts we are leading to improve the uptake of cancer-preventing vaccines by joining the [Pennsylvania Cancer Coalition — PA Cancer Control Plan, Resources, Research, Membership](#).

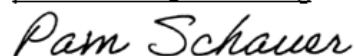
Thank you for all that you do to improve the health of your patients and for your participation in this important effort to prevent cancer by increasing the uptake of HPV vaccination in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

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⁵ [CDC guidance](#) on adult vaccine coverage per the ACA states that insurance plans must cover ACIP-recommended vaccines without charging a copayment or coinsurance when provided by an in-network provider. This is true even for patients who have not met a yearly deductible. This guidance includes coverage for recommended vaccinations based on [shared-clinical decision making](#).