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News Release

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UDOH Campaign Urges HPV Vaccine for Ages 11 and Up *Vaccine prevents cervical and several other cancers*

(SALT LAKE CITY) – You can't protect your children from everything, but thanks to the HPV vaccine, you can protect them from HPV-related cancers. This is the driving force behind a new campaign launched by the Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) Cancer Control Program (UCCP) and Utah's local health departments. Sponsors include Tanner Clinic, Intermountain Healthcare (IHC) and University of Utah Health Care, whose pediatricians tell parents about the importance of getting their sons and daughters vaccinated.

“There is a significant gap between awareness of the HPV vaccine and knowledge of it,” said Rebecca Ward, Health Educator, UDOH. “The goal of this campaign is to let parents know the vaccine *is* cancer prevention, and to increase HPV vaccination rates among adolescents up to age 18.”

The vaccine protects against cervical and several other cancers in both males and females and is recommended for both at age 11 or 12. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Immunization Survey, Utah ranks third-lowest in the nation for girls ages 13-17 who have completed the three-dose series of shots. It also found Utah's numbers for vaccination among boys are so low they can't be compared to national rates.

“We hope this campaign will encourage parents to talk to their child's pediatrician about HPV,” said Dr. Ellie Brownstein, a University of Utah Health Care pediatrician featured

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in the campaign. “The vaccine is a safe and easy way to protect our kids from one more health risk.”

“We’re fortunate to finally have this vaccine available,” said Gary Edwards, Executive Director, Salt Lake County Health Department. “The cancers and complications caused by HPV can have lifelong consequences for children and adults. The HPV vaccine can help significantly reduce these infections.”

Parents with questions about the HPV vaccine should contact their health care provider, pharmacist or local health department. For more information and to see the ads, visit www.cancerutah.org/hpv.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.