

# P R E S I D E N T ' S C A N C E R P A N E L

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## **Global HPV Vaccination: Opportunities and Challenges** **April 23-24, 2013**

The President's Cancer Panel held the fourth workshop in its 2012–2013 series, *Accelerating Progress in Cancer Prevention: The HPV Example*, on April 23-24, 2013, in Miami, Florida. This workshop, entitled *Global HPV Vaccination: Opportunities and Challenges*, brought together participants from five continents to discuss strategies for increasing uptake of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines in the United States and around the world. Issues surrounding the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of HPV vaccination programs were examined, as were the roles of programs, policies, financing, and disease surveillance in these processes. Participants included representatives from vaccine programs in several countries, organizations involved in domestic and global vaccination efforts, academic centers, pharmaceutical companies, and others with expertise in immunization and public health.

HPV infections cause several types of cancer. In the United States and other high-income nations, HPV is responsible for an array of cancers, including cancers of the genital tract, anus, and oropharynx in both men and women. In low-income countries, however, cervical cancer accounts for more than 90 percent of HPV-associated cancers. Worldwide, each year, there are nearly 530,000 new cases of cervical cancer and about 275,000 deaths. The efficacy of HPV vaccines in preventing HPV-associated diseases is well established. Widespread adoption of the vaccines has potential to prevent the majority of cervical cancer cases worldwide and a significant proportion of other HPV-related cancer cases.

Since the first HPV vaccine became available in 2006, more than 40 countries have initiated HPV vaccination programs, and several others are considering initiation. This progress is encouraging, but efforts should be made to ensure that the number of vaccine programs increases at an appropriate pace and that current programs are successful and sustainable. Countries face different challenges in implementation of HPV programs based on a variety of factors, including the robustness of health delivery systems, capacity for disease surveillance, barriers to uptake, and other financial and cultural issues. It is important that programs share their experiences so best practices can be adopted and/or adapted for other settings.

Effective communication strategies have emerged as a critical component of virtually all HPV vaccine programs, including those in both high- and low-resource settings. Clear and concise messaging from credible sources has proven to be effective, while failure to counteract negative messaging has been detrimental in several instances. Many programs also have benefitted from use of champions who have used their influence to increase resources for and/or acceptance of vaccination. Increasing HPV vaccine uptake and assuring effective delivery also depends on minimizing burdens on health care providers, parents and caretakers, and adolescents themselves. Maximizing the convenience of vaccination seems to be important around the world. If research shows that fewer than three doses are sufficient to confer protection, this would likely lead to improvements in uptake.

Low- and middle-income countries interested in implementing HPV vaccination programs often face barriers related to financial resources and infrastructure. Their costs include not only the cost of purchasing vaccines but also costs associated with delivering vaccines. The latter can be even higher, particularly in countries with limited health care delivery systems. The global health community has helped make HPV vaccines available in many low-resource areas through direct provision of vaccines or reduced-price purchasing arrangements. This support should continue, and additional efforts should be made to ensure that all interested low- and middle-income countries have access to the resources needed for program development. Partnerships with a focus on capacity building should help ensure that programs are both effective and sustainable.

The Panel will summarize findings and recommendations from this meeting, along with the other meetings in the series, in its 2012–2013 Annual Report to the President of the United States.