



UMATILLA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

200 SE Third, Pendleton, Oregon

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Umatilla County Health Department is offering expanded access to HPV vaccine

Pendleton, Ore. -- The Umatilla County health department is now offering expanded access to the new cancer-preventing human papillomas virus (HPV) vaccine, thanks to a one-time-only supplement of federal dollars, known as "Section 317" funds.

"We are very pleased to be able to make this offer to girls who would not otherwise be able to get this new vaccine," said Genni Lehnert administrator of Umatilla County health department. "It offers life-saving protection in the fight against cervical cancer."

While the vaccine has been available for many privately insured families, as well as for those eligible for the federal Vaccines for Children program, some poorly-insured people were left without access. For a limited time, girls from age 9 through 12 can obtain the vaccine at no cost if they:

- Are insured with private health insurance, but unable to afford the co-pay or deductible, or
- Are insured with private health insurance that does not cover vaccine costs.

Section 317 funded vaccinations must be administered in a public immunization clinic, such as the health department or a federally qualified health center, Lehnert said. Such centers charge nominal vaccine administration fees, but those can be waived when unaffordable by families.

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the country. The new vaccine has been shown to be highly effective against the two strains of HPV that cause 70 percent of cervical cancer in women.

The HPV vaccine has been on the market since June. Three doses are required for full protection and each dose costs \$135. Some private insurance plans cover the vaccine, but not all do.

The HPV vaccine was added to those covered under VFC last December. VFC supplies federally purchased vaccines at no cost to public and private health care providers. Patients through age 18 are eligible for VFC if they are uninsured, enrolled in Medicaid, or an American Indian or Alaskan Native.

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