



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

**News: For Immediate Release**

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## **JANUARY IS CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**

BALTIMORE, January 25, 2018 – Cervical Health Awareness Month is a chance to raise awareness about how women can protect themselves from HPV (human papillomavirus) and cervical cancer. Nearly 13,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year, but the disease is preventable with vaccination and appropriate screening.

The good news is that there is an HPV vaccine that can prevent HPV, and cervical cancer can often be prevented with regular screening tests (referred to as Pap tests) and follow-up care. Cervical cancer screenings can help detect abnormal cells early, before they turn into cancer. Most deaths from cervical cancer could have been prevented if the patient received regular Pap tests and follow-up treatment.

MedChi wants to use this opportunity to spread the word about important steps women can take to stay healthy:

- Encourage women to get their well-woman visit this year.
- Let women know that the health care reform law covers well-woman visits and cervical cancer screening. Depending on the patients' insurance, women could receive these services at no cost.
- Talk to parents about how important it is for their preteens to get the HPV vaccine. *Both* boys and girls need to receive the vaccine.

MedChi Ethics and Judicial Affairs Committee member, Dr. Carol Ritter, states “Cervical cancer screening consists of two tests, the Pap smear and HPV testing. Women should begin regular pap smear screenings by age 21, and women over the age of 30 should know the HPV status on their pap. Parents can have the pediatrician vaccinate their preteens against HPV, starting at age 11 or 12. Women can still get this life-saving vaccination up to the age of 26, and men can be vaccinated until age 21 at their gynecologist or primary care office.”

### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).