



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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

BALTIMORE, January 24, 2017 – Cervical Health Awareness Month is a chance to raise awareness about how women can protect themselves from HPV (human papillomavirus) and cervical cancer. HPV is a very common infection that spreads through sexual activity. It is also a major cause of cervical cancer. About 79 million Americans currently have HPV and many people with HPV don't even know they are infected.

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 (called 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 be prevented by regular Pap tests and follow-up care.

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. This means that, depending on their insurance, women can get these services at no cost to them.
- Talk to parents about how important it is for their pre-teens to get the HPV vaccine. Both boys and girls need the vaccine.

MedChi President, Dr. Stephen Rockower states “it is important for women to start getting regular Pap tests at age 21 or when they start to engage in sexual activity. It is also important for females to get the HPV vaccine, ideally as a pre-teen around the age of 11 or 12, but women can get the vaccine up to the age of 26.”

### 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).