



The Maryland State Medical Society

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JANUARY IS CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

BALTIMORE, January 24, 2020 – MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is using Cervical Health Awareness Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about how women can protect themselves from HPV (human papillomavirus) and cervical cancer. Each year nearly 13,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with cervical cancer, 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 both men and women can take to stay healthy:

- Encourage women to get their well-woman visit every 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. It is preferred that boys and girls get the vaccination as preteens, but men and women can get the vaccine up to their early 20's.

MedChi President, Dr. Michele Manahan, states “it is essential for everyone to be aware of the dangers of HPV and to understand that we have vaccines to prevent disease and very effective screening tools to find disease early when treatment is easier. Preteen boys and girls should get vaccinated. Young women should start pap smear screenings and know their HPV status. Your pediatrician or gynecologist can provide you with information about this. Please start the conversation.”

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.