

## ▶ Help Protect the Community You Serve From Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States. Cervical cancer is caused by certain types of HPV. All types of genital HPV can cause abnormal cervical cells and abnormal Pap tests. An average of 30 women in the United States—of which five are Latinas/Hispanic women—are diagnosed every day with cervical cancer.

Latinas/Hispanic women is the group with the highest rate of new cervical cancer cases. For this reason, it is important for health care providers, especially those serving the Latino/Hispanic community, to provide resources and guidance on how people can protect themselves and their loved ones against HPV.



## KNOW the FACTS

### ▶ Transmission of HPV

- Both men and women can get HPV. Most infections are often acquired through vaginal or anal intercourse, but HPV can also be transmitted by oral sex and any type of genital contact. Sexual intercourse is not required for transmission of the virus.
- While maintaining a monogamous relationship may also lower the risk of getting HPV, men and women can get HPV if their only partner has been previously infected and did not clear the virus.
- Because HPV often has no signs or symptoms, most infected people don't realize they have HPV, so they can get it and pass it on without even knowing it.
- Condoms may lower the chances of getting HPV. However, they do not offer 100% protection because the virus can infect areas not covered by the condom.

### ▶ Risks Associated with HPV

- Certain types of HPV can lead to cervical cancer and other invasive cancers, such as vaginal and vulvar cancer. Other types of HPV can cause genital warts.
- About half of all women diagnosed with cervical cancer are between 35 and 55 years old. But, many of these women may not realize that they could have been exposed to HPV as early as their teens and 20s.

► **Diagnosis and Treatment of HPV**

- Early detection and treatment of precancerous lesions can prevent the development of cervical cancer in women with HPV. This is why Pap tests are so important.
  - Regular Pap tests are recommended starting when women begin to have sexual intercourse or when they turn 21.
  - Some Latinas/Hispanic women are less likely to get screened for cervical cancer for various reasons, so as their health care provider, it is important for you to remind them.
- If a woman has genital warts, you do not need to change the frequency of Pap test screenings. There is no known cure for HPV, although genital warts caused by the virus can be treated.

► **Help Protect Your Community**

- Remind the populations you serve that getting informed about HPV is the first step in protecting themselves.
- Talk to your community about the various ways they can protect themselves from the disease, including regular screening.
- Encourage parents to talk to their daughters, sisters and other loved ones about HPV. Women remain at risk for developing an HPV infection throughout their lives, so it is important to spread the word!

► **Stay Informed about HPV and Cervical Cancer by Visiting These Online Resources:**

- CDC's HPV Information for Clinicians: <http://www.cdc.gov/STD/HPV/hpv-clinicians-brochure.htm>
- CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP): <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/cancercontacts/nbccedp/contacts.asp>
- Gynecologic Cancer Foundation: [http:// www.thegcf.org](http://www.thegcf.org)

