

February 1, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

February is National Cancer Prevention Month. Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Georgia. One major opportunity in cancer prevention is increasing completion of the HPV vaccination series among children age 13-17. We are making significant progress in vaccinating our children against the HPV virus, but we still lag behind compared to other required vaccinations like Tdap and Meningococcal.

**You hold the power to change these statistics** as a committed practitioner. Parents overwhelmingly listen to and act based solely on their doctor's recommendation. In fact, studies have shown that a patient who receives a provider recommendation is four to five times more likely to receive the HPV vaccination.

Nearly 60 percent of males ages 13-17 in Georgia **do not receive any** doses of HPV vaccine. HPV can cause men to develop certain kinds of cancer. In particular, oral cancers (mouth, throat, tongue) attributable to HPV have been increasing over the past three decades in men. Thirty five percent of females ages 13-17 in Georgia **do not receive any** doses of HPV vaccine putting them at risk of cervical and other cancers. Getting vaccinated against HPV can help prevent these health problems.

Accordingly, the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics ask for your help in improving rates of HPV vaccine completion for both males and females.

- 1. Recommend the HPV vaccine to the parents of teens and children;**
- 2. Present the HPV vaccination as a strongly recommended vaccination; and**
- 3. Learn more about the HPV vaccine.**

In an effort to improve education on HPV guidelines and recommendations, the CDC is offering **free CE credits** in a training called *You Call the Shots Module on HPV*. *You Call the Shots* is updated regularly to include the latest guidelines and recommendation in vaccine practice. Physicians can access the webinar here: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/youcalltheshots.htm>

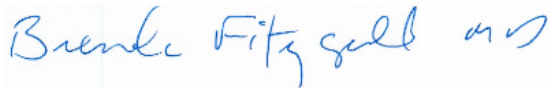
We know you have multiple priorities as they concern the health of your young patients; however, you have an opportunity to truly prevent some types of cancer in our future generations. Together, we will not only save the lives of Georgians,



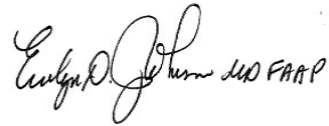
but we will also save future economic resources by preventing more cancer diagnoses.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health of our children.

Sincerely,



Brenda Fitzgerald, MD  
Commissioner  
Georgia Department of Public Health



Evelyn Johnson, MD  
President Georgia Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics

