

Prioritizing Actions to Improve HPV Vaccination with Rural U.S. Communities

Cristóbal Valdebenito, MA; Duha Magzoub, MPH; Julia Brown, MPH; Andrea Stubbs, MPA; Heather M. Brandt, PhD, and the Rural HPV Vaccination Think Tank

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, HPV Cancer Prevention Program



HPV Cancer Prevention Program



Questions and to learn more: PreventHPV@stjude.org | stjude.org/HPVrural

INTRODUCTION

- One-fifth of people in the U.S. choose rural life. Rural communities across the country are heterogeneous.
- Higher rates of HPV cancers and lower rates of HPV vaccination in rural communities are observed compared to the U.S. as a whole and metropolitan areas.
- Urgent actions are needed to reverse these trends and promote HPV cancer prevention with rural communities.
- The St. Jude HPV Cancer Prevention Program initiated efforts to convene thought leaders and subject matter experts to inform rural-facing programming to address low HPV vaccination coverage with rural communities.

METHODS

- In early 2023, St. Jude assembled a think tank of 24 subject matter experts, including representatives from national and community-based organizations, academia, non-profit organizations, and HPV cancer survivors to consider priority actions to improve HPV vaccination coverage with rural communities.
- The think tank met from March to August 2023 for dynamic discussions and debates about possible action steps to prioritize.
- Over a six-month collaborative process, informed by pre-meeting survey insights and interactive meetings, six priority action steps were identified and recommended:



Start at Age 9

Start HPV Vaccination at Age 9: Start at age 9 in rural areas to boost coverage.



Existing Resources

Resource Sharing: Utilize and adapt existing HPV vaccination materials specific to rural needs.



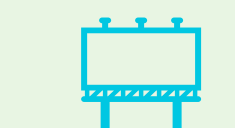
Training Provider

Training for Healthcare Providers: Enhance and tailor HPV vaccination training for rural healthcare professionals.



Advocacy and Policy

Policy Exploration: Investigate the impact of policy on rural HPV vaccination and advocate for supportive measures.



Communication

Tailored Messaging: Create and distribute messages that resonate with the rural lifestyle.

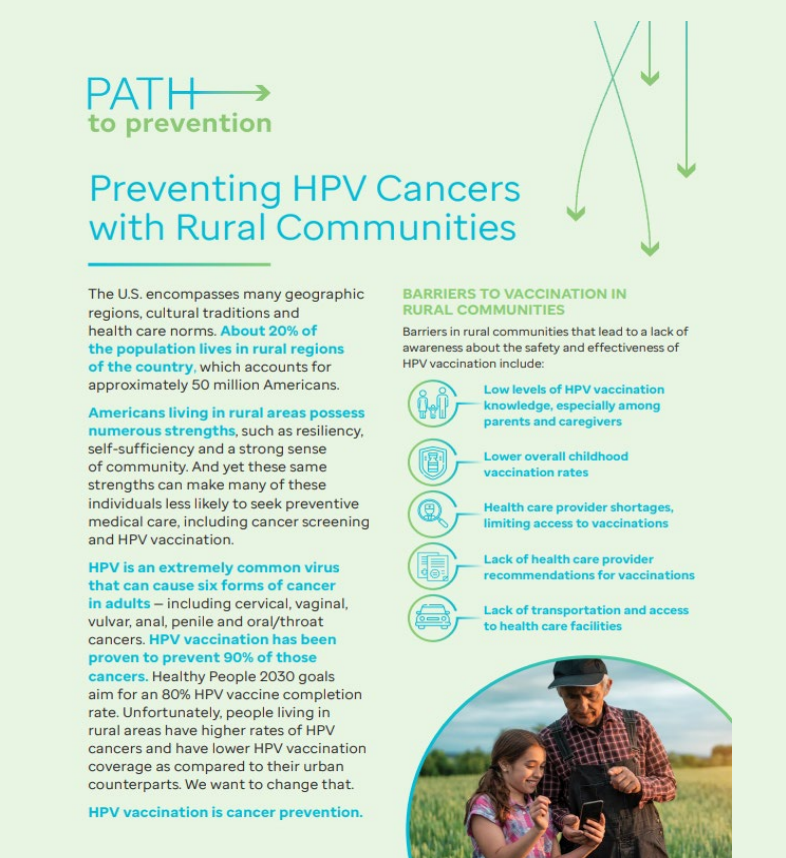


Data

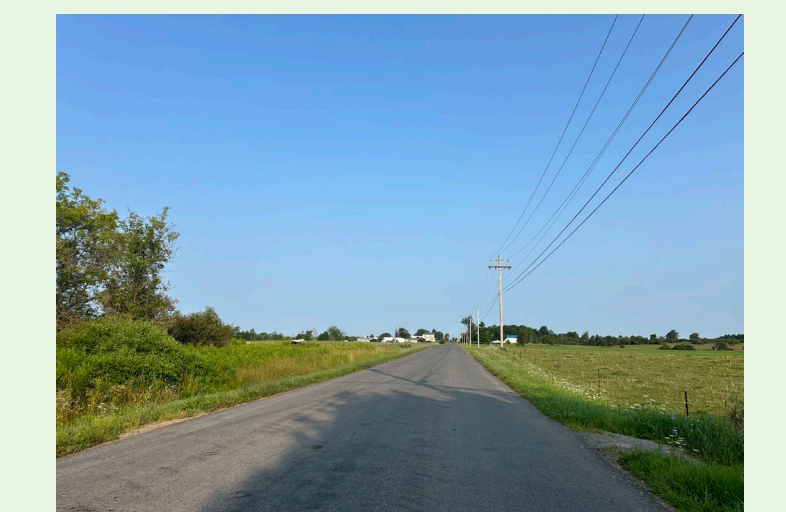
Continuous Review of Data: Regularly update resources and data to track HPV vaccination and HPV cancers in rural communities.

RESULTS

- **Engagement:** Average attendance of 106 people at rural quarterly updates meetings (November 2023; February and May 2024). These meetings align with the priority action of promoting early vaccination by fostering community engagement and sharing information.
- **Resource sharing:** Since January 2023, a monthly article series, "Wide Open Spaces," has reached 4,262 contacts each month, with 20 unique articles contributed by experts. This supports our continuous review and adaptation of resources to meet the evolving needs of rural communities.
- **Tailored Messaging:** A communication campaign for National Rural Health Day in 2023 had 1,331 opens (out of 4,396), and the February 2024 rural communication had 1,267 opens (out of 3,983). These campaigns are part of our efforts to develop, test, and disseminate messages that resonate with rural audiences.
- **Dissemination and Action:** Progress has been made through virtual seminars, webpage updates, and other dissemination methods. This aligns with the priority of compiling and sharing existing resources for addressing HPV vaccination with rural communities.
- **Policy Exploration:** We are examining reimbursement differences between provider types, a crucial aspect of understanding policy influences on HPV vaccination in rural areas. This work is still in progress and highlights our ongoing efforts to explore and advocate for supportive policies.
- **Review and Update HPV Data:** Our research indicates a growing disparity between rural and urban areas. This ongoing work is essential for regularly updating resources and data to track HPV vaccination and HPV cancers in rural communities. We invite attendees to join the next quarterly updates meeting on August 21 to learn more about our findings and progress.



Access this rural HPV vaccination fact sheet at stjude.org/HPVrural



NEXT STEPS

- **Promote On-time Vaccination:** Expand and update resources to encourage HPV vaccinations starting at age 9 in rural communities.
- **Enhance Training Programs:** Extend training for healthcare professionals in rural areas and incorporate their feedback to develop more resources.
- **Refine Messaging Strategies:** Improve engagement through tailored messaging based on insights from previous campaigns, including various communication activities like fact sheets, newsletters, and articles.
- **Support Data Analysis:** Analyze data to understand the rural-urban disparity in HPV cancers and update resources and data regularly to track vaccination and cancer rates in rural areas.
- **National Collaboration:** Participate in the ACS National HPV Vaccination Roundtable rural working group and learning collaborative to address rural HPV vaccination coverage and support advocacy and policy efforts.

RESOURCES

St. Jude Rural Webpage: stjude.org/HPVrural



Preventing HPV Cancers with Rural Communities Quarterly Updates Meeting
August 21, 2024
11:00 am – 12:00 pm CT

