



Eliminating HPV Cancers Starting with Cervical Cancer as a Public Health Concern in the Southeastern United States

The [HPV Vaccination Roundtable of the Southeast](#) prioritized the elimination of HPV cancers starting with cervical cancer as a public health concern following the January 2024 in-person meeting. To address this priority, the Southeast Roundtable convened an implementation team comprised of representatives from across the 12 states and two jurisdictions of the Southeast region. The elimination plan for the region was released in September 2025 with the following overarching goals:

LESS THAN
4 CASES
OF CERVICAL
CANCER
PER 100,000
WOMEN¹

SOUTHEAST ROUNDTABLE PRIMARY ELIMINATION GOALS



1. Increase the percentage of adolescents aged 13-17 years, and starting at age 9 where data are available, across the Southeast completing the **HPV vaccination** series to 80% by 2030.



2. Increase the percentage of people with a cervix across the Southeast who are UTD on **cervical cancer screening** based on the current U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) guidelines to 80% by 2030.



3. Increase the percentage of people with a cervix across the Southeast who receive appropriate **follow-up, diagnosis, and treatment** (if needed) for abnormal cervical cancer screening results to 80% by 2030.

DEFINING ELIMINATION

Elimination does not imply the complete absence of disease. Instead, it signifies the potential to significantly reduce the burden of HPV-related diseases, specifically cervical cancer, and their impact on communities. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines elimination as an incidence rate (new cases of cervical cancer) of less than 4 cases of cervical cancer per 100,000 women.¹



Elimination is not to be confused with eradication, and these terms should not be used interchangeably.

CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION FIRST

As we are optimistic about the potential to eliminate HPV cancers, cervical cancer presents the greatest opportunity for elimination due to routine recommendations for HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and cervical cancer treatment.

Cervical cancer is the most diagnosed HPV cancer among people with a cervix (predominantly identifying as women), with almost all cases attributable to HPV. In the United States, the national rate of new cases of cervical cancer is 7.0 cases per 100,000 women,² higher than the WHO's definition of elimination, and with great variation by geography and among certain population groups. In combination, HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and cervical cancer treatment provide us with the best opportunity to achieve elimination. Pre-cancerous changes to the cells of a cervix caused by HPV can typically be detected through routine screening then prevented and treated through ongoing follow up. Early detection, surveillance, and clinical intervention make cervical cancer highly treatable. With an early-stage diagnosis, the five-year relative survival rate for cervical cancer is 91%.³

The WHO Global Strategy to Accelerate Cervical Cancer Elimination,¹ which focuses on girls and women, includes 90-70-90 targets for HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and cervical cancer treatment:



90%
of girls fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15;



70%
of women screened using a high-performance test by the age of 35, and again by the age of 45; and



90%
of women identified with cervical disease receive treatment (90% of women with pre-cancer treated and 90% of women with invasive cancer managed).

In the United States, and in the Southeast region, this approach may look different, as the HPV vaccination is routinely recommended for all children, both boys and girls, aged 9-26. Additionally, HPV vaccination may be recommended for some individuals aged 27-45 who were not vaccinated when younger.

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DEFINING ELIMINATION PLANNING

Elimination planning refers to the strategic coordination of unified efforts to reduce the burden of HPV cancers. Although eliminating HPV cancers can seem like a big task, formalizing an elimination plan with shared goals and objectives makes elimination realistic and achievable.

CURRENT CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION PLANNING EFFORTS

The WHO Global Strategy to Accelerate Cervical Cancer Elimination advocates for the development and alignment of cervical cancer elimination plans across numerous countries. In the United States, the national efforts are being led by the American Cancer Society (ACS) [National HPV Vaccination Roundtable](#) and the [ACS National Roundtable on Cervical Cancer](#). Importantly, the HPV Vaccination Roundtable of the Southeast's Call to Action plan for cervical cancer elimination is the first regional plan of its kind, establishing a coordinated strategy across 12 states and two jurisdictions to eliminate HPV cancers beginning with cervical cancer. This initiative marks a groundbreaking milestone for the Southeast, complementing and reinforcing ongoing state-level progress. As of September 2025, Alabama remains the only state to have developed and implemented a comprehensive statewide cervical cancer elimination plan, known as [OPERATION WIPE OUT](#). Other states—such as Florida and North Carolina—have incorporated elimination objectives into their cancer plans, while Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi are actively exploring similar statewide approaches.

SUPPORTING ELIMINATION PLANNING EFFORTS IN THE SOUTHEAST

Join us in the Southeast U.S. Call to Action: Elimination of HPV Cancers Starting with Cervical Cancer as a Public Health Concern.

Download the full Call to Action and request access to the elimination toolkit at stjude.org/southeast-elimination.

Learn more about Southeast Roundtable at stjude.org/southeast-roundtable.

There are several opportunities available to support the HPV Vaccination Roundtable of the Southeast in developing and disseminating a regional plan for HPV cancer elimination starting with cervical cancer for the Southeast.

REFERENCES

1. Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative (2024). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/cervical-cancer-elimination-initiative>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cancers linked with HPV each year. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/hpv/cases.html>. Accessed June 2025.
3. Cervical Cancer Prognosis and Survival Rates (2023). National Cancer Institute, <https://www.cancer.gov/types/cervical/survival>

