



HPV Cancer Prevention Program

Preventing HPV Cancers with Rural Communities: Updates and Opportunities

Quarterly Meeting

Summary

May 14, 2025

1:00 – 2:00 PM ET / 12:00 – 1:00 PM CT

Access the presentation slides and recording of the [May 2025 Rural HPV Vaccination Quarterly Updates Meeting](#)

Presenters:

- Nicole Williams, MPH, Program Coordinator, HPV Cancer Prevention Program, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- Maddy McNee, MPH, Program Coordinator, HPV Cancer Prevention Program, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Subject Matter Expert Panel

- Moderator: Deanna Kepka, PhD, MPH, Professor, College of Nursing & Huntsman Cancer Institute, University of Utah
- Trisha Amboree, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Medical University of South Carolina, Hollings Cancer Center
- Natoshia Askelson, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor, Community & Behavioral Health, Director of the Research and Evaluation Core, Institute for Public Health Practice, Research, and Policy, Associate Director for Community Outreach & Engagement, Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center
- Ashley Lach, MHA, CPHA, Program Manager, HPV Disparities, American Cancer Society
- Jason Semprini, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health, Des Moines University
- Christina Turpin, Director, ACS National HPV Vaccination Roundtable
- Whitney Zahnd, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Management and Policy in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa

Progress on Priority Action Steps to Increase HPV Vaccination Coverage with Rural Communities – Nicole Williams, MPH

- Progress continues to be made on the [six priority action steps](#) to increase HPV vaccination with rural communities initially developed by a rural HPV think tank in 2023. As a reminder, the priorities are:
 - Promote starting HPV vaccination at age 9 in rural communities.

- Compile and share existing resources for addressing HPV vaccination with rural communities.
- Develop or adapt health care provider and health care professional HPV vaccination training resources for those serving rural communities.
- Explore policy influences on HPV vaccination in rural areas.
- Develop, test, and disseminate easy-to-use messages for rural audiences.
- Review and update existing resources and data on HPV vaccination and HPV cancers in rural communities.
- During this meeting the following updates were provided:
 - Since development of the rural HPV vaccination priorities two years ago, the public health landscape has been rapidly shifting under the current US administration. In acknowledging the shifts, these priorities are being reviewed to ensure continued momentum and relevancy.
 - The St. Jude team presented the implementation timeline of rural HPV vaccination efforts since 2023 with selected examples of progress to-date including:
 - **Start at Age 9**-Actively promoted [ACS National HPV Vaccination Roundtable](#) resources on starting HPV vaccination at age 9
 - **Existing Resources**-Gathered and disseminated existing rural HPV vaccination resources and developed and disseminated [rural HPV vaccination fact sheet](#)
 - **Training Providers**-Actively promoted [Unity 3Cs vaccination training](#), actively promoted and implemented [Announcement Approach Training](#), actively promoted [ACS Rural HPV Vaccination Learning Community](#)
 - **Advocacy and Policy**-Examined the influence of [policies](#) on rural HPV vaccination coverage and identified reimbursement by provider type as a significant barrier
 - **Communication**-Launched [Stjude.org/HPVrural](#) website, quarterly email communication, and Wide Open Spaces article series to share successful implementation efforts
 - **Data**-Conducted a review of existing HPV vaccination and HPV cancer data to understand current trends and published articles describing results and presented findings in quarterly updates meetings.
 - Progress towards the priority actions will be shared in a summary report to be released later this year. Updated priorities will also be released later this year leading up to National Rural Health Day in November.
 - To better understand the current rural health landscape:
 - Key takeaways from The Future of Rural Health Summit [report](#) were shared. The Summit was convened to identify the needs of rural health communities, build on existing strengths, and develop a cohesive approach to improving the health of rural Americans through policy. The report was released in April outlines a vision for improving rural health systems nationwide.
 - Recent publications underscoring the persistent and widening disparities in HPV vaccination and related cancer outcomes between rural and urban communities were shared to offer important insights into where gaps remain and where our efforts are most urgently needed.
 - Highlights from recent policy changes and federal budget discussions signaling changes to the entire rural health landscape were shared including significant cuts to Medicaid, threats to cancer control and prevention efforts, destabilization to immunization infrastructure, and exacerbation of existing disparities and resource-limitations in rural communities.
 - Activities and learnings from National HPV Conference 2025 were shared which underscored our shared commitment to rural HPV cancer prevention despite mounting policy and funding pressures.

- See **Helpful Resources** below for more information.

Moderated Discussion with Subject Matter Experts

- Given recent shifts in the national public health landscape, experts reflected on the continued relevance of the rural HPV vaccination priorities and offered insights on the future of rural HPV vaccination and cancer prevention as they discussed a central question, “*What do we need to be doing to improve HPV vaccination and prevent HPC cancers within rural communities?*”
- Panelists emphasized the need for continued collaboration, culturally relevant, tailored interventions, and proactive response to shifting environments. Topics discussed included:
 - Data trends showing rural disparities in HPV cancer incidence and mortality, and vaccination rates and how to reverse them
 - Addressing growing vaccine hesitancy post-COVID-19 pandemic through providers (and staff) trained to make a strong recommendation for HPV vaccination and community trusted messengers
 - Anti-vaccination legislation and policies and implications for HPV vaccination and cancer prevention work
 - Improving access to care and reducing barriers to HPV vaccination in rural communities
 - HPV stigma and the need to promote vaccination as cancer prevention
 - Implementing systematic approaches that incorporate needs assessments, quality improvement tools, data and lived experiences to inform design of tailored interventions and robust monitoring and evaluation strategies to iteratively improve process and outcomes
 - Leveraging EHRs and immunization registries to track and increase HPV vaccination
 - Effective use of already constrained funding to do this work
 - Need to focus HPV prevention efforts beyond only cervical cancer
- The discussion and meeting reinforced the urgency of staying adaptable and community-centered in advancing rural HPV vaccination goals going forward.

Next Steps and Upcoming Meetings and Events-Maddy McNee, MPH

- The National Rural Health Association [48th Annual Rural Health Conference](#) will be held May 20-23 in Atlanta, Georgia.
- The [Rural Health and Cancer Conference](#) will be held June 19-21 in Burlington, Vermont.
- Next Preventing HPV Cancers with Rural Communities: Updates and Opportunities Quarterly Meeting
 - August 20, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time/noon – 1:00 p.m. Central Time
 - Click [here](#) to register
 - Visit our website at stjude.org/hpvrural
 - Email PreventHPV@stjude.org with any questions

Helpful Resources

- [The Future of Rural Health Summit Report](#)
- [Cervical Cancer in Rural America: The Roots of the Problem and Seeds of Hope - Cervivor](#)
- [Rural-Urban Disparities in Cervical Cancer Incidence and Mortality Among US Women | Oncology | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network](#)
- [Barriers and facilitators to HPV vaccination in rural South Carolina pharmacies: a qualitative investigation | Implementation Science Communications | Full Text](#)
- [Evaluating implementation by rural clinics of evidence-based interventions to promote HPV vaccination - PMC](#)
- [Rural-urban disparities in human papillomavirus vaccination: Findings from a cross-sectional survey of 13 southern US states, December 2019-January 2020 | Request PDF](#)

- [Perceived Risk and HPV Vaccination Awareness Among Women in Rural and Underserved Communities in the State of Louisiana | Journal of Community Health](#)
- [National Rural Health Association's Advocacy News](#)
- [National Rural Health Association Childhood Immunizations Policy Brief](#)
- [National Rural Health Association priorities](#)
- [Proposed Medicaid cuts](#)
- [Letter to Congress on proposed budget](#)

We encourage you to access [St. Jude HPV Cancer Prevention Program Rural HPV Vaccination Resources](#) and use and share the following rural HPV vaccination resources from the St. Jude HPV Cancer Prevention Program:

- Website: stjude.org/hpvrural
- Preventing HPV Cancers in Rural Communities [fact sheet](#). Printed copies are also available upon request.
- Wide Open Spaces articles are available at stjude.org/hpvrural – read the latest article [here](#)
- January 2023: St. Jude Rural HPV Vaccination Introductory Meeting [recording](#)
- Preventing HPV Cancers with Rural Communities: Quarterly Updates and Opportunities:
 - May 2025 quarterly updates [recording](#) and [newsletter](#)
 - February 2025 quarterly updates [recording](#) and [newsletter](#)
 - November 2024 quarterly updates [recording](#) and [newsletter](#)
 - August 2024 quarterly updates [recording](#) and [newsletter](#)

Tell us what you are working on related to rural HPV cancer prevention. We would love to showcase your work with rural communities to increase HPV vaccination and prevent HPV cancer. Contact us at PreventHPV@stjude.org.