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Contact: HPV Cancer Free Georgia Website: www.hpvcancerfreega.net

March is HPV Awareness Month: vaccination can prevent six types of cancer

ATLANTA — The Georgia Cervical Cancer Consortium (“GC3”), the HPV Cancer Free Georgia, and their statewide partners recognize March as HPV Awareness Month with a unified message: HPV vaccination is cancer prevention, and it is available now.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) can cause six types of cancer - cervical, vulvar, vaginal, penile, anal, mouth, and throat. Over 37,000 people in the United States develop an HPV-related cancer every year, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). According to the Georgia Cancer Registry about 5 people are diagnosed with HPV related cancer **each day**. The HPV vaccine can prevent over 90% of these cancers when administered at the recommended ages.

HPV causes nearly all cervical cancers, and we can eliminate cervical cancer through a combination of vaccination and regular screening. Vulvar, vaginal, penile, and anal cancers can also be linked to HPV, and vaccination reduces the risk these cancers.

Mouth and throat cancers deserve particular attention. Most cancers found in the oropharynx, the area at the back of the throat behind the mouth - are linked to HPV, and they represent the most common HPV cancers in men, according to ACS data. No standard screening test currently exists for these cancers. Routine exams by a dentist, doctor, or dental hygienist can support early detection. Self-checks at home also play a role in catching changes early, before they progress.

Many families in Georgia have not yet connected HPV vaccination to cancer prevention. Conversations have often focused on cervical cancer alone, instead of emphasizing that HPV is linked to 6 types of cancer. GC3 and its partners are working to change that by framing HPV vaccination as what it is: a direct path to preventing cancer.

“The question families should ask is simple,” said Shirley “Bella” Borghi, HPV Workgroup Member, GC3 Steering Committee. “Why wouldn’t you protect the next generation from six preventable cancers?”

Across the state, partners including the American Cancer Society (ACS), the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), the Southeast Round Table, and the members of the

GC3 and HPV Cancer Free Georgia consortiums are coordinating educational outreach through social media campaigns, community-based resources, and collaboration with school health systems and healthcare providers. These efforts aim to move awareness into action, connecting families with vaccination access and building measurable progress toward lower HPV-related cancer rates in Georgia.

Families seeking more information about HPV vaccination, cancer prevention, or local resources can visit www.hpvcancerfreega.net or contact the HPV Cancer Free Georgia directly.

About HPV Cancer Free Georgia

HPV Cancer Free Georgia is a statewide initiative focused on preventing HPV-related cancers through vaccination and education. As part of the Georgia Cancer Control Consortium (GC3), the working group has contributed to the development of Georgia's Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan and supports its implementation, with a focus on two key objectives. To raise awareness and education on HPV vaccination as cancer prevention for six HPV-related cancers. To increase the percentage of vaccine-eligible individuals in Georgia, starting at age 9 and up to 26 years old, who have completed the HPV vaccination series.