



NETWORK *Notification*

Notice Date: October 12, 2023
To: Georgia Medicaid Providers
From: CareSource
Subject: Human Papillomavirus Vaccine Series

Summary

CareSource has partnered with the Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Consortium Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Workgroup, the American Cancer Society, and multiple community organizations to **reduce the cancer burden in Georgia** through increased prevention efforts. The focus of this initiative is on HPV and increasing vaccination rates throughout the state to prevent HPV-related cancers.

Impact & Importance

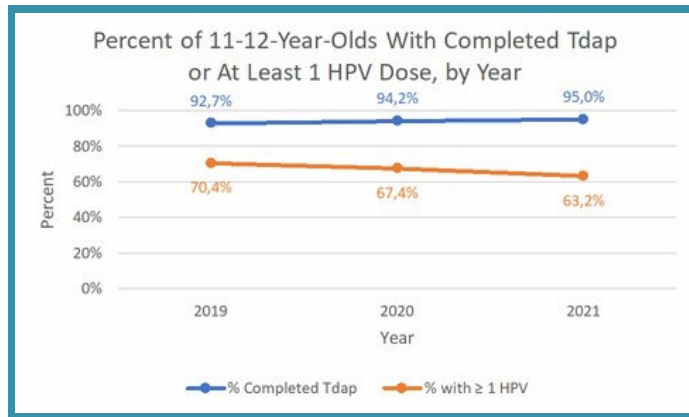
HPV infections can lead to cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers in women, as well as penile cancer in men. Additionally, it can cause anal cancer, oropharyngeal cancer, and genital warts in both men and women. **The HPV vaccine series, which is recommended for male and female adolescents ages 9-12, can prevent more than 90% of HPV-related cancers.** This vaccine is safe, effective, and provides long-lasting protection against the virus.

Despite the effectiveness of the HPV vaccine, vaccination rates in Georgia remain far below those for other routinely recommended vaccines for adolescents. In 2020 and 2021, over 94% of 11- to 12-year old adolescents in Georgia were vaccinated for Tdap, while only 63-67% had received more than one dose of the HPV vaccine. By increasing awareness and education about the importance of the HPV vaccine, CareSource and its partners hope to improve vaccination rates and reduce the cancer burden in Georgia.

According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, **the rate of HPV single-dose vaccinations has decreased from 2019 to 2021**, likely due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the administration of the Tdap vaccine increased during the same period, suggesting that children were still receiving routine vaccinations. This indicates the decrease in HPV vaccinations was not solely due to limited access to vaccines related to COVID-19, but potentially due to HPV-specific barriers or parents being unaware that the vaccine is administered in a two-dose series.

As a healthcare provider, **you can play a critical role in cancer prevention efforts by discussing the importance of the HPV vaccine with parents or guardians** and helping reduce the risk of HPV-related cancers. Research consistently shows that the provider's recommendation to vaccinate is the most influential factor in convincing parents to vaccinate their children.

Currently, Georgia ranks 14th in the country for vaccinating adolescents with Men ACWY but ranked 34th in 2021 for UTS HPV vaccinations. With your continued participation in this initiative, we can work together to reduce the burden of cancer in Georgia.



Partners:



GA-MED-P-2355251

DCH Approved: 10/10/2023