

Joe Manchin III
Governor



Ted Cheatham
Director

WV Toll-free: 1-888-680-7342 • Phone: 1-304-558-7850 • Fax: 1-304-558-2516 • Internet: www.wvpeia.com

October 27, 2006

Dear PEIA Member,

By now, you have probably heard about Gardasil®, the new vaccine which helps to prevent several diseases, such as cervical cancer, genital warts and some pre-cancerous lesions that are caused by 4 types of human papilloma virus (HPV). This HPV vaccine is recommended, as explained below, for females 9 to 26 years of age. An analysis of PEIA membership data revealed that one or more female(s) of your household may be eligible for coverage of immunization with Gardasil.

Specifically, the HPV vaccine is recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as a **routine immunization for girls 11-12 years of age** and may be given as early as 9 years of age. The vaccine is also recommended for females 13-26 years of age who have not previously received it. More specific information is provided on the enclosed HPV Vaccine Information Statement, from the CDC.

PEIA covers ACIP-recommended immunizations for children up to 16 years of age at 100% of the PEIA fee allowance. This means that the HPV vaccine, **Gardasil, will be covered for children 9 to 16 years of age at 100% of the PEIA fee.** The PEIA fee allowance for each Gardasil injection is \$119.75.

For ages 16 and over, PEIA generally covers non-routine immunizations, such as Gardasil, at 80% of the PEIA fee. **For a limited time, however, PEIA will offer coverage of Gardasil "catch-up" immunizations at 100% of the PEIA fee, for any female between the ages of 16-26 years of age.** This coverage begins immediately and ends December 31, 2007.

Be sure to discuss this important immunization with your physician. If you have PEIA benefit questions, please call Acordia National's Customer Service toll-free at 1-888-440-7342.

Remember the road to "Healthy Tomorrows" is paved by protecting yourself and your loved ones from preventable illness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Joseph MD'.

Dr. Sandra Joseph
PEIA Medical Director

Enclosure

CC: Acordia National

HPV (HUMAN PAPILOMAVIRUS) VACCINE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1 What is HPV?

Genital human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States.

There are about 40 types of HPV. About 20 million people in the U.S. are infected, and about 6.2 million more get infected each year. HPV is spread through sexual contact.

Most HPV infections don't cause any symptoms, and go away on their own. But HPV is important mainly because it can cause **cervical cancer** in women. Every year in the U.S. about 10,000 women get cervical cancer and 3,700 die from it. It is the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths among women around the world.

HPV is also associated with several less common types of cancer in both men and women. It can also cause genital warts and warts in the upper respiratory tract.

More than 50% of sexually active men and women are infected with HPV at sometime in their lives.

There is no treatment for HPV infection, but the conditions it causes can be treated.

2 HPV Vaccine - Why get vaccinated?

HPV vaccine is an inactivated (not live) vaccine which protects against 4 major types of HPV.

These include 2 types that cause about 70% of cervical cancer and 2 types that cause about 90% of genital warts. ***HPV vaccine can prevent most genital warts and most cases of cervical cancer.***

Protection from HPV vaccine is expected to be long-lasting. But vaccinated women still need cervical cancer screening because the vaccine does not protect against all HPV types that cause cervical cancer.

3 Who should get HPV vaccine and when?

Routine Vaccination

- HPV vaccine is routinely recommended for girls **11-12 years of age**. Doctors may give it to girls as young as 9 years. It is given as a 3-dose series:

1st Dose:	Now
2nd Dose:	2 months after Dose 1
3rd Dose:	6 months after Dose 1

Why is HPV vaccine given to girls at this age?

It is important for girls to get HPV vaccine **before** their first sexual contact – because they have not been exposed to HPV. For these girls, the vaccine can prevent almost 100% of disease caused by the 4 types of HPV targeted by the vaccine.

However, if a girl or woman is already infected with a type of HPV, the vaccine will not prevent disease from that type.

Catch-Up Vaccination

- The vaccine is also recommended for girls and women **13-26 years of age** who did not receive it when they were younger.

No booster doses are recommended at this time.

HPV vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

4 Some girls or women should not get HPV vaccine or should wait

- Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening **allergic reaction** to yeast, to **any other component of HPV vaccine**, or to a **previous dose of HPV vaccine** should not get the vaccine. Tell your doctor if the person getting the vaccine has any severe allergies.

- **Pregnant women** should not get the vaccine. The vaccine appears to be safe for both the mother and the unborn baby, but it is still being studied. Receiving HPV vaccine when pregnant is **not** a reason to consider terminating the pregnancy. Women who are breast feeding may safely get the vaccine.

Any woman who learns that she was pregnant when she got HPV vaccine is encouraged to call the **HPV vaccine in pregnancy registry** at 800-986-8999.

Information from this registry will help us learn how pregnant women respond to the vaccine.

- People who are mildly ill when the shot is scheduled can still get HPV vaccine. People with **moderate or severe illnesses** should wait until they recover.

5 What are the risks from HPV vaccine?

HPV vaccine does not appear to cause any serious side effects.

However, a vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of **any** vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

Several **mild problems** may occur with HPV vaccine:

- Pain at the injection site (about 8 people in 10)
- Redness or swelling at the injection site (about 1 person in 4)
- Mild fever (100°F) (about 1 person in 10)
- Itching at the injection site (about 1 person in 30)
- Moderate fever (102°F) (about 1 person in 65)

These symptoms do not last long and go away on their own.

Life-threatening allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it would be within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

Like all vaccines, HPV vaccine will continue to be monitored for unusual or severe problems.

6 What if there is a severe reaction?

What should I look for?

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- **Call** a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- **Tell** your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- **Ask** your doctor, nurse, or health department to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form.

Or you can file this report through the VAERS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov, or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

VAERS does not provide medical advice.

7 How can I learn more?

- Ask your doctor or nurse. They can show you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/std/hpv and www.cdc.gov/nip.



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