January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, and the Cancer Prevention in Action Program (CPiA) wants you to know there are two ways to prevent cervical cancer — cervical cancer screening and vaccination against the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV causes nearly all cases of cervical cancer and causes several other cancers.

One of the CPiA goals is to increase cervical cancer screening. Even though cervical cancer screenings are covered under most health insurances, 22% of insured women remain unscreened. One key reason is women cannot afford to take time away from work.

The CPiA program assists employers with the development and implementation of a paid time off policy which will allow employees to use paid leave time from work to obtain lifesaving cancer screenings. This benefit would cover screenings for breast, cervical, colon and other cancers without the employees having to use their earned sick or leave time. This policy is cost effective and has benefits to the employer, such as a healthier and more productive workforce; lower direct medical, workers’ compensation and disability costs; and less cost associated with recruitment and training of new workers.

CPiA also provides education about the importance of the HPV vaccine to health care providers, dental professionals, parents, and young adults. Since the HPV vaccine has been in use, HPV-related cancers have dropped 71% among young adult women.

The HPV vaccine prevents about 90% of HPV-related cancers, including cervical. The vaccine is recommended for boys and girls beginning at age nine and young adults through age 26. Unfortunately, nearly half of adolescents in New York State are not getting the vaccine as recommended.

Through regular screening and HPV vaccination we can reduce, and possibly eliminate, cervical cancer. To learn more about the CPiA Program, which is supported with funds from the State of New York, please contact us at 607-778-3929 or visit our website at <http://takeactionagainstcancer.com/>.

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