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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Most California Parents Support  
New HPV Vaccine According to New Study***

**OAKLAND, CA, DECEMBER 13, 2006...** California parents voiced strong support for vaccinating their daughters with the new human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, according to a study being published in the February issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. The study, by the Public Health Institute's Center for Research on Adolescent Health and Development, polled over 500 randomly selected parents statewide to determine their attitudes toward the vaccine.

Recently licensed by the FDA, the HPV vaccine Gardasil has the potential to prevent most cases of cervical cancer. The challenge now will be to achieve high levels of vaccination among girls and young women, a reality health professionals have feared could be hampered by low parental support. This new study largely puts those concerns to rest in California, where researchers found that three-quarters (75 percent) of parents interviewed support HPV vaccination by the recommended age of 13, and 82 percent support vaccination by the age of 16. The majority of parents from all racial-ethnic groups, both genders, all income and educational levels, and all religious denominations, including Evangelical Christians, supported vaccination.

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States, with more than 70 percent of U.S. women infected at some point during their lifetime. Young men and women age 15–24 years account for approximately three-quarters of all new infections each year. And while most HPV infections do not persist, infections by certain HPV viral subtypes can progress to cervical cancer if left untreated. It is estimated that each year in the United States, approximately 10,000 women are diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer and one third will die as a result.

“In weighing any initial concerns about a new vaccine against the potential benefits, the vast majority of California parents have come out in favor of vaccination,” explains the report’s lead author and Center Director Dr. Norman Constantine. “We hope this study opens the door for health professionals and educators to feel confident as they undertake educational and outreach efforts toward parents of adolescent girls.”

The study unveiled several specific concerns of the 18 percent of parents who were unsupportive. Pragmatic concerns about effects on sexual behavior, vaccine safety concerns, moral concerns about sexual behavior and denial of need were all mentioned by non-supportive parents.

Asian-American and African-American parents were least likely to endorse HPV vaccinations before age 13. “This finding is particularly important in the case of Asian-American parents because Asian-American women in California have the lowest cervical cancer screening rates,” said Constantine.

The study’s results, to be published in the February issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, are now available on the journal’s online-first section (<http://journals.elsevierhealth.com/periodicals/jah/inpress>) and have been summarized in the new fall 2006 issue of the *No Time for Complacency* Policy Review at <http://teenbirths.phi.org/>.

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