



For Immediate Release

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California Medical Association Foundation to Launch California Cervical Cancer Free Campaign

Foundation partners with the California Department of Public Health in the campaign to prevent and impede the progression of cervical cancer

Sacramento, CA - The California Medical Association (CMA) Foundation is launching the California Cervical Cancer Free Campaign to raise awareness about cervical cancer and develop approaches to reduce the rate of this disease in California which kills more than 4,000 women nationwide. Each year, about 1,400 California women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 400 die from this disease.

Most cases of cervical cancer are caused by the Human Papillomavirus, or HPV. Millions of American women are infected with HPV, but due to its often symptomless nature, a woman can be unaware of her risk of developing cervical cancer. "Almost all cervical cancers occur in women who have human papillomavirus (HPV)," said Dr. Dean Blumberg, Associate Professor of Pediatric Infectious Disease at UC Davis Children's Hospital. "Prevention of HPV infection will prevent cervical cancer."

The CMA Foundation will serve as the lead, coordinating agency for the California campaign and work with clinicians serving a large segment of patients from diverse communities, patient groups and community organizations. "With proven prevention methods, including the new HPV vaccine, regular screenings, and stronger public awareness, we have a tremendous opportunity to do even more to curb the devastating effects of cervical cancer," said Carol Lee, Esq., president and CEO of the CMA Foundation. Key activities of the CMA Foundation's California Cervical Cancer Free Campaign during 2010 include:

- The dissemination of the updated CMA Foundation Cervical Cancer/HPV Provider Toolkit which will include a broader understanding of the health disparities associated with cervical cancer, new resources for patient/provider communications and consumer education resources.
- The CMA Foundation's Vaccine Summit to be held in partnership with the California Department of Public Health. Strategies to strengthen both healthcare provider and consumer understanding of the issues related to cervical cancer, HPV and the HPV vaccine will be mapped out.
- The Health Disparities Convening as part of the Foundation's 2010 Network of Ethnic Physician Organizations (NEPO) Summit to be held in September. This pre-summit session will highlight best practices, key action steps and resources that are available to increase the use of vaccinations in diverse communities.

- Survey of health care professionals on current vaccine practices to inform the campaign about the challenges for health care professionals.
- Convene health plans and payors to address vaccine coverage and access issues.

All women are susceptible to cervical cancer, which is the 10th most common cancer diagnosed among California women. It is also the 5th most common cancer in the Latino population, 6th most in the Vietnamese and 10th most common in the African American populations. Mortality from cervical cancer also varies by race/ethnicity with Hispanic and African American women having the highest rates. Mortality from cervical cancer is associated with later stage of diagnosis, and thus poorer access to preventive services, including infrequent or no Pap screening and/or lack of adherence to follow-up. Therefore, successful campaigns to reduce and eliminate cervical cancer must address the language and cultural needs of all women.

The goal of the campaign is to increase screening and vaccination so that every woman has the chance to be protected from cervical cancer. “The message is so clear and so important – get yourself screened and vaccinated,” said Marlene von Friederichs-Fitzwater, cervical cancer survivor and director of the UC Davis Cancer Center’s Outreach Research and Education Program. “I know because I developed cervical cancer and was diagnosed at a late stage because I put off having a Pap test for several years when I was in my 30s. I put myself at risk, and, as a single mother, put my sons at risk of losing their only parent.”

Startup funding for the California Cervical Cancer Free Campaign is made possible by a grant from GlaxoSmithKline. For more information about the campaign, please contact Elissa Maas, Vice President of Programs, CMA Foundation, at emaas@thecmafoundation.org.

About the California Medical Association (CMA) Foundation

The CMA Foundation is a nonprofit organization that serves as a link between physicians and their communities. In 2006, the Foundation developed its Cervical Cancer & HPV Project, Screen Yourself & Vaccinate your Daughter with the goal of educating both patients and clinicians about the connection between the HPV virus and cervical cancer. To learn more about the Foundation’s various projects and initiatives, please visit www.thecmafoundation.org.

About the California Department of Public Health

The California Department of Public Health is dedicated to optimizing the health and well-being of the people in California. Visit www.cdph.ca.gov for more information.

About GlaxoSmithKline

GlaxoSmithKline is one of the world’s leading research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare companies committed to improving the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer. For more information please visit www.gskvaccines.com.

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