



A call for urgent action to protect Mississippi children from HPV-related cancers.

Safeguarding the health of Mississippi children should be a leading priority in our region. Currently, human papillomavirus (HPV) related cancers and extremely low HPV vaccination rates, are a growing concern among Mississippi (MS) vaccination providers—and we have the power to protect our children.

For HPV-related cancers, MS ranks 3rd in the U.S. for cervical cancer incidence; 3rd in the U.S. for cervical cancer mortality; 10th in the U.S. for oropharyngeal cancer incidence; and 1st in the U.S. for oropharyngeal mortality. Fortunately, there is a vaccine available to help prevent HPV-related cancers.

In 2020, for youth aged 13-17 years, MS was ranked last in the U.S. for HPV vaccination. Fewer than 1 in 3 (31.9%) of MS youth were up to date. By comparison, the U.S. up-to-date HPV vaccination rate was 58.6%.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruption to routine vaccinations and well visits. In response, National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Cancer Centers and other organizations issued a [joint statement](#) in May 2021 urging the nation's health care systems, health care providers, parents and children, and young adults to get back on track.

The MS HPV Roundtable (MSHPVRT)— including members such as the Mississippi State Department of Health, the American Cancer Society, the Mississippi Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Mississippi Section American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital— has collaboratively developed an urgent call for action. **Today, MS health care providers, public health professionals and community stakeholders have partnered to address the low HPV vaccination rates in MS and protect children from disease and cancer.**

Mississippians must get up to date on missed doses of recommended vaccines to stay ahead of possible outbreaks and preserve the health of families, schools and communities across the state. To get there, it will take the concerted effort and support of MS health care systems and providers, public health professionals, parents, and caregivers, and all of us to get back on track. Acting now is critical to support the recommended vaccinations for MS adolescents.

Health care systems and providers can:

- 1) identify patients who have missed doses and contact them to schedule appointments;
- 2) begin HPV vaccinations at age 9 for more opportunities to complete the vaccine series by the 13th birthday;
- 3) prompt health care providers to ask about vaccination status;
- 4) use every patient visit as an opportunity for vaccination.

Parents and caregivers can check with their health care provider to see if their child is due for any other vaccines.

All of us play a role in getting back on track with recommended vaccines that were missed because of the pandemic. Talk to family members and friends and direct them to credible sources of information.

There is no time to waste in getting the recommended vaccinations to stay ahead of preventable diseases and to prevent HPV-related cancers.



More information is available from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [Mississippi Department of Health](#), the [MS HPV Roundtable](#), the [American Cancer Society](#), and the [St Jude Children's Research Hospital](#).

This call to action statement is endorsed by the following partners/organizations:

American Cancer Society

- Baptist Memorial Hospital Attala
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Booneville
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Calhoun
- Baptist Memorial Hospital DeSoto
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Golden Triangle
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Leake
- Baptist Memorial Hospital North Mississippi
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Union County
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Yazoo
- Central MS Health Services, Inc.
- Children's Defense Fund Southern Regional Office
- Coastal Family Health Center
- Community Health Center Association of Mississippi
- Family Health Care Clinic, Inc.
- Forrest General Hospital
- G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center
- Greenwood Leflore Hospital Children's Clinic
- Jackson Pediatric Associates
- Magnolia Health Plan
- Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center

Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians

- Mississippi Baptist Medical Center
- Mississippi Cancer Registry

Mississippi Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics

- Mississippi Medical and Surgical Association
- Mississippi Partnership for Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition
- Mississippi Hospital Association

Mississippi HPV Roundtable

- Mississippi Oncology Society



Mississippi Pharmacists Association
Mississippi Public Health Association
Mississippi Section American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Mississippi State Department of Health
Molina Healthcare of Mississippi
Open Arms Healthcare Center
Plan A Health, Inc
Singing River Health System
Southeast Louisiana Area Health Education Center
Southeast Mississippi Rural Health Initiative, Inc.
St. Dominic's Gynecologic Oncology
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
Sunflower Diagnostic Center
Teen Health Mississippi
Trinity Pediatric Clinic
UMMC Cancer Center and Research Institute
UMMC Department of Pediatrics
UMMC School of Dentistry
UMMC School of Nursing
UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Mississippi
University of Mississippi- School of Applied Sciences
Quinn Healthcare, PLLC

***Organizations in bold signifies a lead partner on this initiative**