HPV Vaccine Myth Busting for Health Care Providers Social Media Toolkit

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INTRODUCTION

Despite advances in awareness and prevention, human papillomavirus (HPV) remains a major public health threat. Seventy-nine million Americans are currently infected with HPV and approximately 14 million people become newly infected each year.\(^1\) HPV is so common that most sexually active men and women (4 out of 5 people) will get at least one type of HPV at some point in their lives.\(^2\) While the HPV vaccine has been proven to be a safe and highly effective form of protection against the disease, vaccination rates continue to lag behind those of other preventable diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 40% of adolescent girls and 60% of adolescent boys remain unvaccinated against HPV.\(^3\) This shortfall carries serious consequences, translating into 53,000 future cervical cancer cases over the lifetimes of girls ages 12 years and younger.\(^4\)

Health care provider recommendation is the single most important factor in whether parents choose to vaccinate their children.\(^6\) Conversely, lack of provider recommendation is a major reason for non-vaccination.\(^5\) Yet, a sizeable portion of physicians report not strongly recommending the vaccine (27%) and many parents report receiving little or no information about it from their child’s provider.\(^2,4\) The CDC encourages providers to recommend the HPV vaccine the same way other adolescent vaccines are recommended and reports that straightforward messages can be effective in communicating with parents.\(^6\)

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to help public health professionals establish a “Myth Busting” social media strategy to encourage providers to effectively talk to parents and adolescents about the HPV vaccine.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

Public health professionals, state area health education centers and community-based organizations can all use this toolkit and adapt its messaging to reach health care providers most effectively.

SOCIAL MEDIA 101

According to a 2014 Pew Research Center survey, “74% of online adults use social networking sites.”\(^7\) In addition, “one-third of adults access social media related to health.”\(^8\) A 2012 study also found that 70% of physicians reported using social media on “at least a monthly basis.”\(^9\)

Social media represents a unique opportunity to reach a large audience of both consumers and professionals. It is more important than ever that online medical and health information is “trustworthy, engaging, and accessible to digitally empowered consumers.”\(^10\)

When designing and thinking about your social media strategy, consider your audience, the channel(s) you want to use, your objective(s), or what you are trying to achieve, as well as how you will measure success. Remember that your social media activities should ultimately support your organization’s goals.\(^10\)

Don’t have the time or capacity to implement this toolkit? Don’t fret! You can still engage your audience by retweeting messages from @GWCanerinSt

Looking for more in-depth info on social media channels and communication strategy? Check out our Media Planning and Media Relations Guide or our other social media toolkits.
SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest and more: Social media is growing every day, along with opportunities for outreach.

TWITTER BEST PRACTICES

- Keep Tweets short, between 100-110 characters. This allows other users to Retweet while adding their own comments.
- Add photos or videos. Adding a photo boosts Retweets by 62% on average.\(^{11}\)
- Tweet at author or organizational Twitter handles when possible. If you are mentioning a person/organization at the beginning of a Tweet, add a period (.) before the Tweet, unless you only want the Tweet to be seen by people who are following both of you.
- Twitter, Tweetdeck, Sprout Social and Hootsuite all have options to shorten links as you write Tweets. Other options for shortening links are provided under Additional Tools and Resources.
- Promote engagement with other organizations by favoriting or Retweeting their content. You can even add your own comment before Retweeting.
- Be responsive and recognize Retweets, @ mentions and when others share your content. It doesn’t take much, but a simple “thank you” goes a long way toward building engagement.
- Remember that Tweets cannot be edited once they are posted, so proofread before you post!

FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES

- Shorter posts (around 250 characters) get up to 60% more distribution than longer posts.\(^{12}\)
- Use photos or videos to make your posts stand out. Posts with photos receive up to 50% more likes than non-photo posts.\(^{13}\) However, be aware of Facebook’s policies about what can be posted and identifying people in photos without consent.\(^{12}\)
- Use a conversational tone and explain to your audience why the content should matter to them.\(^{13}\)
- Posts that start conversations by asking questions and responding receive approximately 70% above-average engagement.\(^{13}\)
- Vary your post type. Users don’t engage the same way with every post.\(^{13}\)
- Track your results and act on them. Facebook offers analytic data that you can use to find out what posts are being “liked” or shared and which ones aren’t. Focus your efforts on what is working.\(^{12}\)

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROVIDER COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE HPV VACCINE

Providers are often told to deliver a “strong” or “quality” vaccine recommendation to parents. But what does quality really mean when it comes to recommending the HPV vaccine?

A recent survey of pediatricians and family physicians found that quality of a provider’s HPV vaccine recommendation was based on:

- **Strength** of endorsement (i.e., saying the vaccine is important)
- **Timeliness** (recommending it by ages 11-12)
- **Consistency** (recommending it routinely vs. using a risk-based approach), and
- **Urgency** (recommending same day vaccination).\(^{64}\)
PROVIDERS SHOULD...

Strength

- Show a clear understanding of the vaccine and be able to explain its purpose.¹⁴
- Not assume that parents know about the vaccine and will ask for it if they want it. “Up to 60% of parents have no prior knowledge about the vaccine before their child’s provider educates them about it.”¹⁵
- Be able to clearly explain current vaccine safety information.¹⁴ Large scale studies on HPV vaccine safety have been published and show little or no evidence of severe side-effects.⁵
- Acknowledge minor risks and side effects. Communicating that vaccination has no risks can lead patients to view the vaccine as more risky.⁵
- Frame non-vaccination as an active decision, comparable to vaccination – there is risk associated with not receiving the HPV vaccine.⁵
- Not let perception of HPV vaccine hesitancy in parents affect the strength of their recommendation.¹⁴ Studies show most providers overestimate levels of vaccine hesitancy in parents.¹⁶,¹⁷
- Explain that the vaccine protects against cervical cancer, other cancers and genital warts (mentioning all three is more effective and compelling).⁴
- Have materials available for parents who have questions, including a list of credible websites parents or adolescents can use as a source of information. Visual aids can also help providers communicate complex information.⁵
- Discuss the vaccine as cancer prevention and avoid discussing sexual risk factors¹⁸

Timeliness

- Recommend the HPV vaccine for all children ages 11-12, even if it is not the specific purpose of the visit.
- Emphasize the preventive purpose of the vaccine (it’s most effective when initiated far in advance of risk of exposure).
- Start conversations about the HPV vaccine by saying the child is due (as opposed to giving information or soliciting questions).⁴

Consistency

- Recommend the vaccine for all patients, not just those they perceive as being at high risk.
- Recommend the vaccine for both boys and girls (parents may not realize that boys should be vaccinated too).
- Explain that there’s no association between getting the HPV vaccine and higher rates of sexual activity (or earlier start to sexual activity).²

Urgency

- Recommend that patients in the correct age group receive the vaccine during their visit (rather than at a later date).
- Start the conversation with parents by saying that their child is due for the vaccine today.⁴
- Explain to parents that the vaccine is most effective in 11-12 year olds because they have the strongest immune response.¹⁹
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<tr>
<th>Tweets</th>
<th>Facebook Posts</th>
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<td>Providers: Your recommendation for the #HPVvax matters! Read some tips &amp; time-savers for talking w/parents: <a href="http://goo.gl/yUUb54">http://goo.gl/yUUb54</a></td>
<td>Providers: Did you know your recommendation is the single biggest predictor of whether a parent vaccinates their child against HPV? Get tips and time-savers for talking to parents here: <a href="http://goo.gl/yUUb54">http://goo.gl/yUUb54</a></td>
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<td>Providers: DYK ≈60% of parents don’t know about the #HPVvax until you talk to them? Find out more: <a href="http://goo.gl/7QwgAg">http://goo.gl/7QwgAg</a> #HPVmyths</td>
<td>Providers: MYTH- “People already know about the HPV vaccine and will ask for it if they want it” BUSTED- Up to 60% of parents don’t know about the vaccine until you talk to them about it. More myths busted: <a href="http://goo.gl/7QwgAg">http://goo.gl/7QwgAg</a></td>
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<td>Providers: When talking about #HPVvax, clearly explain safety info &amp; share how vaccines get tested: <a href="http://goo.gl/7FkHnw">http://goo.gl/7FkHnw</a> #PreteenVaxScene</td>
<td>Providers: MYTH- “The HPV vaccine is unsafe” BUSTED- Since 2006, 70 million doses of HPV vaccines have been given in the U.S. NO serious safety concerns have been identified. Here’s how vaccines are tested &amp; monitored: <a href="http://goo.gl/7FkHnw">http://goo.gl/7FkHnw</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Let parents know that side effects of #HPVvax are mild, similar to other shots. Other FAQs: <a href="http://goo.gl/yUUb54">http://goo.gl/yUUb54</a> #PreventCancer</td>
<td>Providers: It’s important to acknowledge minor side effects of the HPV vaccine. Communicating that vaccination has NO risks can backfire. More quick tips for talking to parents: <a href="http://goo.gl/yUUb54">http://goo.gl/yUUb54</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Choosing not to vaccinate for #HPV is an ACTIVE choice w/risks that include cervicalcancer: <a href="http://goo.gl/ZQios7">http://goo.gl/ZQios7</a> #PreventCancer</td>
<td>Providers: When talking about HPV vaccination, frame not vaccinating as an ACTIVE choice, one that comes with risk of cervical cancer, other cancers &amp; genital warts. <a href="http://goo.gl/ZQios7">http://goo.gl/ZQios7</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Don’t let hesitant parents keep you from recommending #HPVvax. More tips on talking w/parents: <a href="https://goo.gl/SlaENv">https://goo.gl/SlaENv</a> #HPVmyths</td>
<td>Providers: MYTH- “Parents don’t want to give their kids the HPV vaccine” BUSTED- Providers often over-estimate vaccine hesitancy in parents. Don’t let it stop you from strongly recommending the vaccine. More on talking to vaccine-hesitant parents: <a href="https://goo.gl/SlaENv">https://goo.gl/SlaENv</a></td>
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<td>Providers: #HPVvax protects against more than just #cervicalcancer. Talk w/ parents about #CancerPrevention + more: <a href="http://goo.gl/yJIFAM">http://goo.gl/yJIFAM</a></td>
<td>Providers: Did you know the HPV vaccine protects against more than just cervical cancer? Mentioning cervical cancer, other cancers &amp; genital warts makes your recommendation even stronger for parents: <a href="http://goo.gl/yJIFAM">http://goo.gl/yJIFAM</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Parents have ?s about #HPVvax, you’ve got answers. Share these resources for parents: <a href="http://goo.gl/FAaVYa">http://goo.gl/FAaVYa</a> #PreteenVaxScene</td>
<td>Providers: Have materials available for parents who have questions, including credible websites parents or teens can use as a source of information. Here’s some info from CDC to start: <a href="http://goo.gl/FAaVYa">http://goo.gl/FAaVYa</a></td>
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<td>Providers: #DYK you can recommend the #HPVvax even if it’s not the reason for a visit? Commit to #CancerPrevention <a href="http://goo.gl/4GVThL">http://goo.gl/4GVThL</a></td>
<td>Providers: A quality HPV vaccine recommendation should be timely (11-12 years old). Be sure to recommend the vaccine even if it’s not the specific purpose of the visit. How to prioritize cancer prevention in your office: <a href="http://goo.gl/4GVThL">http://goo.gl/4GVThL</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Bundling the #HPVvax with other routine vaccinations can ↑ acceptability <a href="http://goo.gl/r9R6sr">http://goo.gl/r9R6sr</a></td>
<td>Providers: Did you know that bundling HPV vaccination with other routine adolescent vaccinations can increase vaccine acceptability? Get the latest vaccine schedule for teens: <a href="http://goo.gl/r9R6sr">http://goo.gl/r9R6sr</a></td>
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<td>Providers: The #HPVvax is #CancerPrevention- Let parents know it’s most effective EARLY. More info: <a href="http://goo.gl/fHgmt4">http://goo.gl/fHgmt4</a></td>
<td>Providers: Parents need a concrete reason to vaccinate their 11 or 12 year old against HPV. Emphasize that it’s cancer prevention &amp; most effective when given early. This infographic shows why: <a href="http://goo.gl/fHgmt4">http://goo.gl/fHgmt4</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Start conversations about #HPVvax by saying the child is due for vaccination, then answer ?s: <a href="http://goo.gl/3OoX7n">http://goo.gl/3OoX7n</a></td>
<td>Providers: MYTH: &quot; Asking questions or giving info is the best way to bring up the HPV vaccine&quot; BUSTED: Starting conversations by saying the child is DUE for the HPV vaccine is shown to be more effective. More info: <a href="http://goo.gl/3OoX7n">http://goo.gl/3OoX7n</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Be consistent in recommending the #HPVvax to ALL patients, not just those at ↑ risk: <a href="http://goo.gl/xDJgcu">http://goo.gl/xDJgcu #HPVmyths</a></td>
<td>Providers: When it comes to recommending the HPV vaccine, consistency is key: Recommend it to ALL patients, not just the ones you think are high risk. This schedule can help keep parents on track: <a href="http://goo.gl/xDJgcu">http://goo.gl/xDJgcu</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Boys should get the #HPVvax too. #PreventCancer by letting parents know: <a href="http://goo.gl/71GhFN">http://goo.gl/71GhFN</a></td>
<td>Providers: MYTH: &quot;Only girls need the HPV vaccine&quot; BUSTED: The HPV vaccine protects boys against certain types of cancer &amp; genital warts too and make them less likely to spread HPV to others. <a href="http://goo.gl/71GhFN">http://goo.gl/71GhFN</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Tell parents there’s no link between getting #HPVvax &amp; ↑ rates of sexual activity: <a href="http://goo.gl/QHDrN9">http://goo.gl/QHDrN9 #HPVmyths</a></td>
<td>Providers: MYTH- &quot;Getting the HPV vaccine means permission to have sex&quot; BUSTED- There’s no association between getting the HPV vaccine and ↑ rates of sexual activity (or an earlier start to sexual activity): <a href="http://goo.gl/QHDrN9">http://goo.gl/QHDrN9</a></td>
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<td>Patients 11-12 yrs old should get #HPVvax during their visit (don’t wait until later). CDC app has latest schedules: <a href="http://goo.gl/9wOCQk">http://goo.gl/9wOCQk</a></td>
<td>Providers: Recommend that patients 11-12 years old receive the HPV vaccine during their visit (not later). Studies show this makes parents more likely to vaccinate. Download CDC’s app to keep up to date on the latest vaccine schedules: <a href="http://goo.gl/9wOCQk">http://goo.gl/9wOCQk</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Start the conversation about #HPVvax saying child is due. Makes parents more likely to vaccinate: <a href="http://goo.gl/8ymE16">http://goo.gl/8ymE16</a></td>
<td>Providers: Did you know starting the conversation about HPV vaccination by saying a child is due makes parents more likely to vaccinate? You are the key to cancer prevention: <a href="http://goo.gl/8ymE16">http://goo.gl/8ymE16</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Tell parents the #HPVvax is most effective in 11-12 yr olds. Here’s why: <a href="http://goo.gl/fHgmt4">http://goo.gl/fHgmt4 #PreteenVaxScene</a></td>
<td>Providers: The HPV vaccine is most effective in 11-12 year olds because they have a stronger immune response. Here's how to explain it to parents: <a href="http://goo.gl/fHgmt4">http://goo.gl/fHgmt4</a></td>
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<td>Providers: Prioritize #HPVvax in your office. These materials make it easy: <a href="http://goo.gl/4GVThL">http://goo.gl/4GVThL</a></td>
<td>Providers, are you looking to prioritize HPV vaccination in your office? These materials from CDC can help your office commit to cancer prevention: <a href="http://goo.gl/4GVThL">http://goo.gl/4GVThL</a></td>
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OTHER IDEAS TO PROMOTE HPV VACCINE AWARENESS

January is cervical health awareness month, as well as cervical cancer awareness month. February is National Cancer Prevention Month and World Cancer Day is February 4th. These observances are a natural tie-in to promoting HPV vaccination among providers (and parents). Here are some ideas for engagement during cervical health month or any other time of the year.

Host or Participate in a Twitter Chat

Twitter chats are a great way to expand your audience and promote engagement with other partners and organizations. You can organize a Twitter chat yourself or simply participate in another one. Twitter chats are live moderated Twitter conversations focused around a specific topic, using a single hashtag. They usually last an hour and involve a list of pre-circulated questions to participants. If you are organizing a chat, reach out to partners early and provide the list of questions as far in advance as possible.

Host a Twitterview

A Twitterview is an interview conducted through Tweets. A Twitterview is a form of Twitter Chat where individuals participate in a live moderated Twitter conversation focused around a specific topic using a single hashtag.

For a Twitterview, typically an interviewer asks questions directly to the interviewee and followers can follow the conversation through an event hashtag. You may also open up the interview to questions from the audience. The benefits of a Twitterview include the creation of relevant and interesting content, dissemination of accurate and evidence-based information, increased visibility of your organization and increased engagement with followers.

Pick a hashtag. Using hashtags is a way to group and organize messages together. In Twitterviews, hashtags are used to distinguish your interview from regular Tweets in the feed. Your followers will also be able to filter and track your Twitterview posts by searching your hashtag. Symplur amalgamates popular and established Tweet Chat hashtags on health care topics. If you use an established hashtag, your Tweets may reach audiences that you usually do not reach. If you would like to create your own hashtag, make sure it is short and intuitive. Don’t be afraid to use abbreviations and acronyms, because your questions and answers including the hashtag must be under 140 characters.

Pick a date and time, then secure a speaker or speakers to be interviewed. Potentially influential speakers might include researchers, cancer survivors or caregivers, health care providers or other subject matter experts. Provide your speaker(s) with a list of what questions will be asked before the event, so they can prepare their answers in under 140 characters, which can take time and editing. Decide in advance whether you are going to open up the interview to your followers and let your speaker(s) know what to expect. Consider using a website to help manage the Twitterview such as TweetChat or TWEBS.

Promote the event to your followers. Host the event, running it similarly to how you would host a live in-person meeting (introduce topic, speaker, your organization). Number your questions starting with a “Q” for question. For example: Q1: What is the #1 thing parents should know about #HPVvax? #HPVFactsChat. Your speaker(s) can either “reply” to the question you Tweet or Tweet starting with an “A” and the
corresponding number. For example: A1: #HPVvax is #CancerPrevention! Learn how you can protect your kids: www.xxx.com #HPVFactsChat

Retweet or favorite the best questions posed by your followers and answers by your speaker(s) and be sure to share relevant links and resources. After the event, archive an event summary and share with participants and your other followers. Consider using Storify to create a visual transcript of the Twitterview.

Best Practices for Engagement Events and Activities

- Plan early and well
- Expand your audience and reach by partnering with another organization
- Make sure you use an original hashtag (unless it makes sense to use an established hashtag)
- Prepare as many questions and responses in Tweet format as possible in advance
- Involving well-known local figures may help raise the profile of your event(s) and increase participation and engagement

MEASURING SUCCESS

Looking to measure the success of your social media campaign? Twitter and Facebook both offer free analytic tools to allow you to demonstrate the impact of your social media efforts.

Twitter Analytics allows you to see and download detailed tracking information about Tweet activity, engagement, audience and trends over time. Log in to analytics.twitter.com/about with your Twitter username and password to learn more.

Facebook Insights allows users to track page likes, post reach, number of visits, specific posts as well as who is following your page. According to Facebook, “posts that get more likes, comments and shares show up more in News Feed and are seen by more people. Posts that are hidden, reported as spam or cause people to unlike your Page reach fewer people.”

Klout tracks the influence and reach of your social media profiles and provides a score based on how others are interacting with your content across multiple networks. It also provides information on your top posts so you can see what content is generating action from your networks.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

For Health Care Providers:

Social Media for Family Physicians: Guidelines and Resources for Success: Guidance from the American Academy of Family Physicians

Tips and Time-savers for Talking with Parents about HPV Vaccine: One-page summary with talking points and suggested messaging from CDC

HPV Vaccinate Adolescents against Cancer (VACs) Project: Myth Busting: Highlights 11 common myths and misconceptions about the HPV vaccine as well as facts and talking points to counteract them

General Social Media Resources:

Owly: Link shortener from Hootsuite

TinyURL: Link shortener that allows for customization of URLs to make them more memorable
Goo.gl: Link shortener that allows for tracking of clicks

Hootsuite, Sprout Social: Online platforms that allow organizations to schedule Tweets and Facebook posts, keep up with their feed (the posts of those they follow), and collect basic analytics for evaluation

Tweetdeck: Platform from Twitter that allows for pre-scheduling Tweets, including pre-loading photos

Klout: Service that tracks your organization’s level of online social influence

Canva: Allows users to create visually appealing graphics and photos for social media and print materials; includes a collection of low-cost or free stock photos and backgrounds

CDC Public Health Image Library (PHIL): Free image library. Search “HPV,” “vaccination” or “cancer prevention” for relevant results to go with HPV vaccine and cancer prevention messaging.

CDC "photostream" on Flickr: Website designed for public image sharing. CDC images include public health photos and graphics developed for public health events that users can comment on and share.

GLOSSARY

Facebook: A social networking site that allows people to create personal profiles and stay connected with others (www.facebook.com)

Feed: News feeds which you receive straight into your account

Followers: People who have agreed to receive your Tweets or Facebook posts

Hashtags (#): A form of metadata tag that makes it possible to group messages

Retweet (RT): Re-posting of someone else’s Tweet

Tweets: 140-character text messages

Twitter: An online social networking and microblogging service that enables users to send and read short 140-character text messages, called “Tweets” (www.twitter.com)

Twitter chat: A live moderated Twitter conversation focused around a specific topic using a single hashtag

Twitter handle: Your Twitter name that begins with the “@” sign. For example: @GWcancerInst

Twittersphere or Twitterverse: The total universe of Twitter users and their habits

Twitterview: A combination of the terms Twitter, a popular microblogging platform, and interview. It is a type of interview for which the medium restricts the interviewer and interviewee to short-form responses

See Twitter’s “Twitter Glossary” for more.


http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6429a3.htm


