



# Eliminating HPV Cancers, Starting with Cervical Cancer, as a Public Health Problem in the Southeastern United States

The HPV Vaccination Roundtable of the Southeast has prioritized the elimination of HPV cancers, starting with cervical cancer, as a public health problem as an actionable opportunity for 2024-25. To address this priority, the Southeast Roundtable convened an implementation team comprised of representatives from across the region who are tasked with developing and disseminating a regional elimination plan for the Southeast. An elimination plan is a way to garner support and catalyze action to improve HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and cervical cancer treatment, aiming for the elimination of HPV cancers starting with cervical cancer.

LESS THAN  
**4 CASES**  
OF CERVICAL  
CANCER  
PER 100,000  
WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

## DEFINING ELIMINATION

Elimination does not imply the complete absence of disease. Instead, it signifies the potential to significantly reduce the burden of HPV-related diseases, specifically cervical cancer, and their impact on communities. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines elimination as an incidence rate (new cases of cervical cancer) of less than 4 cases of cervical cancer per 100,000 women<sup>1</sup>.



Elimination is not to be confused with eradication, and these terms should not be used interchangeably.

### CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION FIRST

As we are optimistic about the potential to eliminate HPV cancers, cervical cancer presents the greatest opportunity for elimination due to routine recommendations for HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and cervical cancer treatment.

Cervical cancer is the most diagnosed HPV cancer among people with a cervix (predominantly identifying as women), with almost all cases attributable to HPV. In the United States, the national rate of new cases of cervical cancer is 7.1 cases per 100,000 women<sup>2</sup>, higher than the WHO's definition of elimination, and with great variation by geography and among certain population groups. In combination, HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and cervical cancer treatment provide us with the best opportunity to achieve elimination. Pre-cancerous changes to the cells of a cervix caused by HPV can typically be detected through routine screening then prevented and treated through ongoing follow up. Early detection, surveillance, and clinical intervention make cervical cancer highly treatable. With an early-stage diagnosis, the five-year relative survival rate for cervical cancer is 91%<sup>3</sup>.

The WHO Global Strategy to Accelerate Cervical Cancer Elimination<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on girls and women, includes 90-70-90 targets for HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and cervical cancer treatment:



of girls fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15;



of women screened using a high-performance test by the age of 35, and again by the age of 45; and



of women identified with cervical disease receive treatment  
(90% of women with pre-cancer treated and 90% of women with invasive cancer managed).

In the United States, this approach may look different, as the HPV vaccination is routinely recommended for all children, both boys and girls, aged 9-26. Additionally, HPV vaccination may be recommended for some individuals aged 27-45 who were not vaccinated when younger.

### ELIMINATION PLANNING

Elimination planning refers to the strategic coordination of unified efforts to reduce the burden of HPV cancers. Although eliminating HPV cancers can seem like a big task, formalizing an elimination plan with shared goals and objectives makes elimination realistic and achievable.

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### CURRENT CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION PLANNING EFFORTS

The WHO Global Strategy to Accelerate Cervical Cancer Elimination advocates for the development and alignment of cervical cancer elimination plans across numerous countries. In the United States, the national efforts are being led by the American Cancer Society (ACS) [National HPV Vaccination Roundtable](#) and the [ACS National Cervical Cancer Roundtable](#), alongside a regional plan for the Southeast. As of July 2024, Alabama stands as the sole state to have developed and implemented a comprehensive statewide cervical cancer elimination plan, known as [Operation Wipe Out](#). Meanwhile, states such as Florida have integrated cervical cancer elimination as a key objective in their state cancer plans. Numerous other states are actively exploring avenues to develop and implement similar elimination plans.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[What will it take to eliminate cervical cancer in the USA?](#) by Ginsburg et al.

[Projected time to elimination of cervical cancer in the USA: a comparative modelling study](#) by Burger et al.

[The Road to Cervical Cancer Elimination](#) by Anna R. Giuliano.

[Eliminating Cervical Cancer in the Southeast Training](#)

### SUPPORTING ELIMINATION PLANNING EFFORTS IN THE SOUTHEAST

There are several opportunities available to support the HPV Vaccination Roundtable of the Southeast in developing and disseminating a regional plan for HPV cancer elimination, starting with cervical cancer, for the Southeast.

For further information, please visit [stjude.org/southeast-roundtable](https://stjude.org/southeast-roundtable), email [PreventHPV@stjude.org](mailto:PreventHPV@stjude.org), or sign up [here](#) to stay informed.

### REFERENCES

1. Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative (2024). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/cervical-cancer-elimination-initiative>
2. U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2024 submission data (2017-2021): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; <https://gis.cdc.gov/Cancer/USCS/#/RiskFactors/>, released in July 2024
3. Cervical Cancer Prognosis and Survival Rates (2023). National Cancer Institute, <https://www.cancer.gov/types/cervical/survival>

