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January is National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
100 new cases expected to be diagnosed in the state in 2014

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Cabinet Secretary Karen L. Bowling today reminded residents about the seriousness of cervical cancer as part of National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Bowling noted that approximately 100 women in West Virginia will be diagnosed with cervical cancer this year.

"Cervical cancer is preventable with Pap screening tests and vaccines to thwart human papillomavirus (HPV), which is the main cause of cervical cancer," Bowling said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), half of all cervical cancers occur in women rarely or never screened for cancer, and another 10%–20% of cancers develop among women who were screened but did not receive adequate follow-up care.

"When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long-term survival and good quality of life," Bowling said. "Now that we have HPV vaccines available, we are able to prevent cervical cancer before it occurs."

The American Cancer Society reports that the number of cervical cancer deaths decreased 70% between 1955 and 1992, and continues to decline each year due to increasing use of the Pap test. The Pap test can detect changes in the cervix before cancer develops and it can detect cancer in its earliest stages when more treatment options are available. Cervical cancer is nearly 100% curable when detected early. For females under the age of 26, HPV vaccination is available and provides protection against cervical cancer.

The West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (WVBCCSP) assists in providing low-income, uninsured, or underinsured women free or low-cost Pap tests. The WVBCCSP works with over 300 providers statewide to ensure program-eligible women receive the services they need. An uninsured woman with a family of four can have a total household income of \$47,100 and still be eligible for the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program. To learn more about cervical cancer and the WVBCCSP visit www.wvdhhr.org/bccsp/ or call 1-800-642-8522.

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