



#EUHPP LIVE WEBINAR

Health and medical students as HPV vaccination ambassadors

25 JANUARY 2024, 10.00 - 12.00 CET

To mark Cervical Cancer Awareness Month in January, the European Commission held a webinar to raise awareness of the benefits of HPV vaccination, as part of its work to promote lifelong health protection.

Gathering around 100 people online, the aim of this webinar was to empower health and medical students from across the EU with the knowledge and skills they need to promote the benefits of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination, in line with the objectives of the [#UnitedInProtection campaign](#). The webinar was organised just days ahead of the [Commission proposal](#) for a Council Recommendation on vaccine-preventable cancers, as a deliverable of [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#).

During the webinar, participants heard from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control that each year, 67 500 HPV-related cancers are diagnosed in the EU. However, many of these cases are preventable through safe and effective vaccination, which is **recommended for pre-teens and teens across genders as part of cancer prevention actions**.

Key take-aways from the webinar:

- **Vaccination is a national competence and there are different national approaches to HPV vaccination:** National programmes target preadolescent girls, and most also target boys, through organised school-based vaccination plans or delivery through primary care services (see the [vaccine scheduler](#) for details). Some EU countries are offering catch up vaccinations for older teens and young adults.
- **Barriers to HPV vaccination are varied across the EU and target audience,** including confidence, access, cost, knowledge and cultural issues: Understanding is required to overcome them and effectively reach target audiences through trusted channels.
- **Recommendation from a trusted health professional is key to vaccine acceptance:** Healthcare professionals – and students – are important partners for communication and confidence building including by raising the topic, providing scientific evidence, and listening to people's concerns, so that people can make well informed decisions.
- **Clear, concise messaging can help increase awareness, retention and understanding:** Data and visuals, for example in the form of comics, can be effective tools to initiate conversations with younger audiences, raise awareness and correct misinformation.

- **Students are well placed to bridge the gaps between science and communication:** whilst learning the theory at university, students are keen to get practical experience and to help address declining confidence in vaccination, including through the [Coalition for Vaccination](#).
- **Vaccination is a crucial primary prevention tool but does not eliminate the need for routine screening.**

The webinar featured engaging questions from participants about the recommended number of doses and boosters for immunocompromised youngsters, as well as how they can best communicate with different audiences, especially younger people and their parents, and via which channels.

Useful resources

- [Human papillomavirus \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [United in Protection communication campaign and toolkits](#)
- [The amazing adventures of Syrgo and BC - European Union \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [European Vaccination Information Portal / Home page | European Vaccination Information Portal \(europa.eu\)](#)
- <https://www.europeancancer.org/hpv>
- [Cancer pulse - European Cancer Organisation](#)

EU-funded projects relating to HPV vaccination

- [PERCH - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [PROTECT-EUROPE – European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [ReThinkHPVaccination - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)