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From: Missouri Area Health Education Centers

Providing HPV Education in Diverse Settings in Missouri

In 2015, the Northeast Missouri AHEC office was selected to take part in the National AHEC Organization's HPV Project by forming partnerships and organizing trainings for healthcare providers throughout Missouri. The goal of the project is to provide education to health professionals and students in health professional schools regarding the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. By increasing awareness and training health professionals about the HPV vaccine, the overall effort is to increase HPV vaccination rates of girls and boys, ages 11 and 12. Through the network of ten offices, MAHEC is participating in the project to help spread the word that the HPV vaccination is the best way to prevent many types of cancer.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nationwide, 60% of adolescent girls have received one or more doses of the HPV vaccine. In Missouri, the percentage is 49% or less. Regarding adolescent boys, the rate in Missouri is even lower – 29% or less has received one or more doses of the HPV vaccination. National coverage for boys is 42%. The challenge is clear for Missouri healthcare providers and educators . . . raise the HPV vaccination rates so young people in Missouri will have healthier, more productive lives.

The MAHEC offices work with a variety of settings for healthcare providers and educational institutions. Through community networking organizations, MAHEC staff members work with local health departments, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Critical Access Hospitals as well as regional hospitals and health profession programs. Over the last eleven months, over 350 providers and/or students have participated in "You Are the Key to HPV Cancer Prevention" training sessions. The training includes not only facts and figures about how the vaccine can prevent HPV-related cancers, but a variety of patient scenarios are given to prepare providers to address the concerns of parents of pre-teens/adolescents. Parents need reassurance for their children to receive the vaccinations, and providers can give them information and recommendations to make educated decisions.

AHEC staff selected existing partners with whom they had coordinated other training programs. These contacts resulted in

- two out-of-state CME programs hosted by ATSU/KCOM,
- three Grand Rounds presentations at hospitals,
- two noon lectures for medical students and community providers, and
- training at an FQHC

Missouri AHEC has been honored to be part of this national project the past two years and look forward to continued involvement in year three.

Melissa Lawson, MD, prepares to speak through Missouri Telehealth Network

MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally-governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the numbers of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the numbers of professionals caring for underserved populations.

The MAHEC partners include:

- A.T. Still University – Kirksville
- University of Missouri – Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- Northeast Missouri AHEC – Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC – St. Joseph
- West Central Missouri AHEC – Lexington
- Mid-Missouri AHEC – Rolla
- East Central Missouri AHEC – St. Louis
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
- Southwest Missouri AHEC – Springfield