NYC Health Department launches campaign to promote HPV vaccine

By ACSH Staff — August 12, 2014

Yesterday, the New York City Health Department launched a campaign promoting the benefits of the HPV vaccine in an effort to encourage parents to vaccinate their children. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States and the vaccine may reduce a child’s risk of HPV-related cancers by up to 99 percent. Furthermore, about half of the new HPV infections occur in individuals ages 15 to 24.

Despite the recommendations for those ages 9 to 26 to receive the vaccination, only 47 percent of boys and 64 percent of girls ages 13 to 17 in New York City have received at least one dose of the vaccine, with far fewer having received the recommended three-doses. And vaccination coverage is even lower in Staten island, Central/Southern Brooklyn and Greenpoint/Williamsburg with 6 percent to 25 percent of girls and 0 percent to 6 percent of boys receiving all three doses.

The ad campaign will appear in New York City’s subway cars and will run for two months in both English and Spanish.

Health Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett says, Many of our younger New Yorkers have not been vaccinated against HPV, despite the vaccine’s ability to prevent many types of cancer, including cervical cancer. I encourage parents to use their child’s back-to-school doctor’s appointment as an opportunity to protect their children against HPV. Getting vaccinated today can prevent cancer down the road.

ACSH’s Elizabeth Whelan adds, Hopefully this campaign will draw attention to the importance of this vaccine and at least spark public discussion, which can be used by those in public health to educate people about the benefits of vaccinating children against HPV. Although national coverage has increased slightly, the numbers are still abysmally low and it’s important that we in public health continue to promote this cancer-preventing vaccine. This and the hepatitis-b vaccine are the only preventive measures against cancer-causing microorganisms that we have; it’s truly...
tragic that they are so under-utilized.