



## “ Toolkit for Promoting HPV Vaccination Within School Systems ”

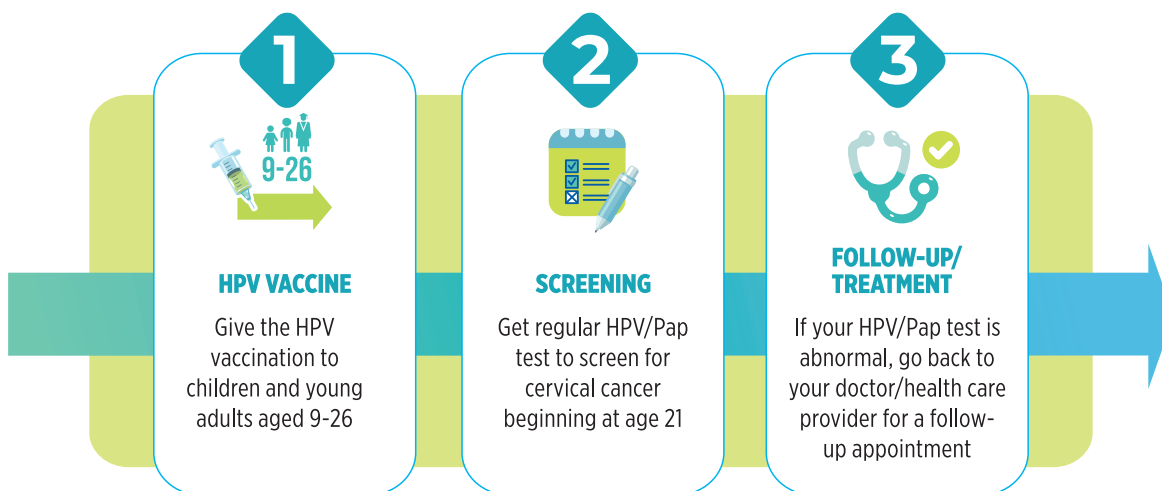
**WIPE  
OUT**  
cervical  
cancer  
ALABAMA

This toolkit was developed by high school students in the Chambers County School District Health Science Career Technical Education Program (Chambers County, Alabama) as a guide to training high school students in the development and implementation of an HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccination campaign. This training is designed to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead an effective and engaging health campaign in their schools and communities.

### CONTEXT

**OPERATION WIPE OUT** is a statewide initiative to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem in Alabama. It focuses on three strategies: HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and follow-up/treatment. The Chambers County School District partnered with **OPERATION WIPE OUT** to develop, implement, and evaluate a multi-channel communication campaign to promote the HPV vaccination designed and delivered by high school students in the Health Science Career Technical Education Program.

[www.operationwipeout.org](http://www.operationwipeout.org)



### GOAL

To promote the HPV vaccination among students through peer-led education and a community awareness campaign.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Middle and high school students, parents, school personnel, and the community.

# STEPS

## 1 Engage the School System Leadership

- Get support from the school system leadership for implementation of the program.
- Establish a communication mechanism to keep the leadership informed of the activities.

*When there is something that we can do to make a difference then I think we should take the step to induce it. It will help the community and not just us.*

David Owen  
Chambers County School System, Assistant Superintendent  
when the program was implemented

## 2 Identify a Teacher or School Nurse to Serve as Mentor and Provide Education & Guidance

- Identify a teacher or school nurse who will work with the students in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the campaign.
- The teacher who leads the Health Science Career Technical Education Program may be a logical choice as he/she works directly with students on a pathway to health-related careers. He/she also can involve a local health care professional who can assist in providing education and with the development of the campaign.

*Our participation in the OPERATION WIPE OUT initiative has been an amazing opportunity for my students. One of my goals as a health science instructor is to teach my students how to reach patients where they are and provide accurate health care information that allows educated decisions. My students have really taken ownership of developing and delivering the OPERATION WIPE OUT message to our community.*

Jennifer Williams  
Health Science Instructor, Chambers County

## 3 Capacity Building of School Personnel

- Provide education to all school personnel so they are aware of the program and can support the students as well as answer questions from parents and community members. In the case of the Chambers County School District, this was accomplished at the annual school orientation with an additional in-depth workshop for school nurses.

- Provide frequent updates to school personnel so the entire school system is engaged in the program.

## 4 Engage Potential Community Partners

- Community partners can be a great asset to the program. In Chambers County, the role of the Rotary Club of LaFayette was instrumental as these community leaders lent their own credibility to the program as well as disseminated the information in the community.
- Other examples: churches, local businesses, health care agencies, civic organizations.

*It takes a village. We've all heard this - how true in today's fast-paced, diverse society! Engaging multiple community entities to dispense information is crucial in order to reach the population with vital information and ways to connect.*

Dr. Butch Busby, Rotary Club of LaFayette

## 5 Capacity Building of Students

- Provide education on cervical cancer, HPV, the connection with cervical cancer, and the importance of the HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and follow-up/treatment in a fun and interesting manner. Refer to **Exhibit A** for an example of a presentation and **Exhibit B** for an example of an interactive activity that can be used to reinforce the knowledge.
- Provide students with facts and statistics, including data from your county/geographic area. For example, one of the key messages was that Chambers County had the highest cervical cancer incidence in Alabama. This motivated the students to change this scenario.
- Provide them with the skills to address myths and misconceptions in an empathic way. For instance, it is important to implement role-play scenarios on how to talk to their parents if they are interested in getting the HPV vaccine, and how to better understand and respect different points of view from peers and community members, etc.
- It is important to reinforce the approach that students and school personnel do not convey the message that children/adolescents/young adults need to get vaccinated. They can be trained to provide information, answer questions, and respect the individual's decision.

## 6 Campaign Development

- **Target Audience:** Once students have a clear understanding of the topic, they can proceed with identifying the target audience(s) to determine next steps. In the case of Chambers County School District, students identified three groups: (1) children between the ages of 9 and 12, (2) adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18, and (3) parents of children/adolescents between the ages of 9 and 18.
- **Information Gathering/Discovery:** Engage students in activities toward getting to know the target audience(s). In the case of Chambers County, students were divided into sub-groups for conducting informal interviews with the three identified target audiences described above. Refer to **Exhibit C** for examples of interview guides.

- **Campaign “Mascot” and Slogan:**

Capitalize on some students’ graphic design talents. The mascot for the Chambers County School District was “Captain Vaccine.” The slogan was “Vaccination is Key! Wipe Out HPV.” An effort was made to be consistent with the color scheme and message of the larger OPERATION WIPE OUT campaign. Refer to **Exhibit D** for examples of a mascot and slogan.



- **Identification of Communication Channels:** Based on the information gathered in the discovery phase, engage students in the identification of the communication channels by discussing how to leverage existing school and/or community assets. Chambers County students identified eight main communication channels: (1) Posters in the community targeting parents with messages from “leaders.” The identification and selection of “influential community leaders” was based on students suggesting names, the reason these individuals were “influential leaders,” and a final vote; (2) Posters in the high schools targeting students; (3) Peer-to-peer education and/or education by a health care professional; (4) Message from the Superintendent on the school website; (5) Collaboration with local newspaper; (6) Social media posts of videos of “influential community leaders;” (7) Interactive activities with middle school students to promote awareness on the importance of getting the HPV vaccine with messages to the parents.

**Exhibits E and F** provide examples of some of these activities (activity coloring book and bingo game); (8) Festive community event for parents with interactive activities and education to promote the HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and follow-up that were linked to clinical services.

- **Message Creation:** This component should also be guided by the “discovery phase.” Students can be divided into sub-groups to work on different messages. Final messages are agreed upon by the entire group. In Chambers County, both community posters and high school posters had a logical sequence and were replaced every couple of weeks. Refer to **Exhibit G** for examples of community posters, **Exhibit H** for high school posters, and **Exhibit I** for signs placed in the school pick-up line.

## 7 Implementation

- **Social Media:** While social media is a great vehicle to disseminate information, you can coordinate with school leadership on their level of comfort. In Chambers County, because students were minors, social media messages and videos were posted through the school Facebook page.
- **Message from Superintendent:** It is important for the leadership to demonstrate public engagement in the campaign. The Chambers County School District Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent placed a video message on the school website, talked to parents, and encouraged school personnel to get involved in the campaign.
- **Peer-to-Peer Education:** Peer-to-peer education is the preferable way to disseminate the message as they are the true messengers. Some examples include lunch-and-learns with other students, sessions with middle-schoolers, etc.
- **Education by a Health Care Professional:** If the school has an auditorium, you can consider bringing a dynamic health care professional to speak to students followed by an interactive activity to reinforce the knowledge.
- **Merchandise with the Program Logo/Message:** These tokens serve as reinforcers of the campaign messages and opportunities for education. Refer to **Exhibit J** for examples.
- **Differentiated Shirts for the Student Leaders:** The students involved in the development and implementation of the campaign can have different shirts to identify program leaders. This promotes their pride and program ownership as well as opportunities for one-on-one education.

## 8 School-Based HPV Vaccination

- If possible, make arrangements for school-based HPV vaccination with parental consent.

## 9

## Ensuring a Safe and Inclusive Environment

- Ensure that the program is inclusive and respectful of different beliefs and backgrounds. Provide a platform for students, parents, and school personnel to ask questions and express concerns about vaccination without fear of judgment.
- Make sure that students' personal health decisions, including vaccination status, are respected and kept private.

*It has been a good program as students learned a lot of information. I have seen students come out of their comfort zone and shine.*

*David Owen  
Chambers County School System, Assistant  
Superintendent when the program was implemented*

## Note

*Although the primary focus of this toolkit is promotion of the HPV vaccination uptake, it is important to address cervical cancer screening and follow-up/treatment.*

By empowering high school students with the knowledge and tools to create and implement an HPV vaccination campaign, you not only help raise awareness about an important health issue, but also foster leadership skills, teamwork, and civic engagement among these future leaders.

## 10

## Evaluation

- There are many ways you can assess the impact of the program. In Chambers County, students in the Health Science program completed a baseline and post-test to assess the impact of the capacity building activities, including knowledge and confidence. Pulse surveys were also distributed through the school Facebook page to assess awareness of the campaign, behavior change, and suggestions for improvement. Refer to **Exhibit K** for examples of assessments.
- Collaborate with the State Department of Public Health Immunization Division to provide data on the HPV vaccination.

**OPERATION WIPE OUT** showed me that even small actions can make a big difference in creating a healthier community. I learned that by educating and supporting each other, we can work together to make real changes. This experience helped me see the power of taking small steps toward better health. Positive change begins with awareness.

*Mady Turnham, Senior, Valley High School*

**OPERATION WIPE OUT** showed me that getting vaccinated is important for both yourself and everyone else. I learned what it means to be leader and standing up for the community, sharing key health information and using critical thinking to reach out to both kids and adults.

*Madyson Fuzzell, Senior, LaFayette High School*

## Acknowledgments

We, Health Science Career Technical Education Program students, are very thankful for this opportunity and would like to thank a few people who believed in us and mentored us throughout this process:

**Dr. Casey Chambley**, Chamber County School System Superintendent, and **Mr. David Owen**, Assistant Superintendent, by bringing this opportunity to us and supporting us throughout the campaign.

**Mrs. Jennifer Williams**, our beloved teacher, for motivating us, supporting us, and believing in us. She is more than a teacher. She is our inspiration to pursue a health care career and be of service to our communities no matter what we choose to do.

**Dr. Isabel Scarinci**, Professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and **OPERATION WIPE OUT** leader, for her inspiration, dedication, and guidance.

