

Millions of HPV Vaccinations Were Missed During COVID, but There's Good News

A partnership to prevent human papillomavirus cancers maintained and even grew HPV vaccination rates for 9- to 13-year-olds.

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Through domestic and global programming as well as research, the American Cancer Society (ACS) serves as the national leader and catalyst for human papillomavirus (HPV) cancer prevention. The ACS 2021 HPV VACs Impact Report released June 22 highlights the local and regional outcomes of the organization's work to increase HPV vaccinations.

The report estimates that over the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic approximately 3 to 4 million doses have been missed. Despite challenges in 2021, ACS health care partners maintained rates for 9- to 13-year-olds, growing shot series initiation by 2% for ages 9 to 10 and shot completion by 2% for age 13.

The goal of Mission: HPV Cancer Free, a public health initiative meant to eliminate vaccine-preventable HPV cancers as a public health problem, is to reach an annual vaccination rate of 80% of 13-year-olds in the United States by 2026. The ACS VACs (Vaccinate Adolescents against Cancers) program is focused on specifically improving adolescent (ages 9-12) HPV vaccination rates through engaging health systems, payors, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), state health departments and other state-based partners. The program increases the availability and utilization of the vaccine using clinic-level interventions, quality improvement efforts, provider education, and system-wide process changes. Under the VACs program, ACS has partnered with 43 health systems in 13 states, five health plans across seven states, and regional coalitions across 22 states to reach more than 289,000 children in 2021.

Every year, approximately 14 million people in the U.S. are infected with HPV, a common virus that can cause six types of cancer. Almost 35,000 men and women are diagnosed with HPV caused cancer each year. HPV vaccination can prevent more than 90 percent of these cancers if given at the recommended ages.

Read the full report [here](#).

Learn more about HPV vaccination [here](#).

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