

## **American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

**8/17/09**

The mission of ASCCP is to improve clinician competence and patient outcomes through provider education. In the years leading to HPV vaccine approval, we had seen widespread ignorance about HPV and its role in cervical oncogenesis. That is why educating clinicians about HPV vaccines became a core component of our mission. ASCCP did accept funds from a variety of sources, including HPV vaccine manufacturers, for these important educational efforts. Funding for this purpose has not been available through government or nonprofit sources. We emphasize that industry representatives played no role in the development or content of ASCCP educational materials.

ASCCP regards vaccination as a paradigm changing innovation that promises to reduce the burden of cervical cancer and also of abnormal Pap tests and CIN. HPV vaccination is safe and effective for preventing infection with target viruses. The role of high-risk HPV types in cervical oncogenesis is proven, and blocking infection will decrease the burden of cervical cancer. Members of the ASCCP consider it unethical to deny a generation of women access to HPV vaccination in order to demonstrate a decline in cervical cancer rates.

The current prevention system based on Pap testing, colposcopy and destruction of precursors is effective but remains expensive, intrusive, insensitive and nonspecific. Because it cannot be determined which women with CIN are fated to develop cancer, it results in overtreatment of thousands of women each year, with consequent cost, procedure-related injury, and perinatal morbidity resulting from cervical compromise.

Dr. L. Stewart Massad, the ASCCP Practice and Ethics Committees chair, is serving as the Society's spokesperson to the media on all aspects related to this article. Media questions should be directed to Dr. Massad at 314-757-7121 or, if no answer, at 314-362-3181.