



News Release

For Immediate Release

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UDOH Launches Cervical Cancer Prevention Contest

Online community to raise HPV awareness for a chance at prizes

(SALT LAKE CITY) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is ‘going viral’ to do battle against the human papillomavirus (HPV). The UDOH Cancer Control Program (UCCP) has launched the Cervical Cancer Prevention Contest to get young men and women talking about how to prevent the disease that is most often caused by the sexually-transmitted HPV infection.

Entrants are invited to blog or tweet to their friends and family about HPV, and must include one of three cervical cancer and HPV prevention messages in a post encouraging either abstinence, vaccination, or Pap smear tests. Entrants must be 18 or older and may enter multiple times by submitting their tweet or blog link to the UCCP Web site. The entry form and contest criteria are available on the UCCP Web site, www.cancerutah.org/prevent. Participants can win prizes that include a \$300 spa pass, a stay in a Park City resort, or an iPod with an iTunes gift certificate. Winners will be randomly drawn for the weekly prizes on June 8th, June 15th, and June 22nd.

“We’re confident that spreading the prevention message virally will better reach those who are most at risk of contracting the virus,” said Whitney Johnson, UDOH Health Program Specialist. “It’s also an opportunity for the online community to educate their peers and play a greater role in stopping the spread of HPV.”

In the United States, cervical cancer affects more than 10,000 women every year, with deaths approaching 4,000 annually. In Utah, approximately 60 women are diagnosed with and 17 die from the cancer every year. Because the majority of cervical cancer is caused by HPV, the contest is encouraging proper prevention for females ages 18-30.

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The good news is that cervical cancer is largely preventable. Although the HPV vaccine can provide some protection, abstinence and regular screening with a Pap smear test are critical to early detection and successful treatment.

“This contest can help stop a deadly virus,” said Johnson. “We are excited to see how many in the online community will make the effort to play a role in saving lives.”

For more information, visit www.cancerutah.org/prevent.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.