



The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

February 17, 2026

Testimony Before the House Rules Committee Regarding HB 4135, HPV Awareness

Chair Bowman, Vice Chair Elmer and members of the committee, my name is Stella Dantas, MD, FACOG and I'm the immediate national past president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). We would like to express our support of HB 4135, which designates March 4 as HPV awareness day. Promoting awareness is a key step to preventing cervical cancer and saving lives.

The HPV vaccine can protect you and your partner(s) from cancer.

HPV infection is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the United States. Eight out of 10 people will contract a form of human papillomavirus in their lifetime.

Most people who have sex will get an HPV infection at some point in their lives. HPV infection often has no signs or symptoms. People with HPV infection usually do not know they have it. This is one reason why HPV spreads easily.

HPV, Cancer and the Importance of Cervical Cancer Screening

The immune system fights most HPV infections and clears them from the body, usually within 2 years. But sometimes HPV infections can last longer. A longer infection with a "high-risk" HPV type can turn into cancer. It usually takes years for this to happen.

Cervical cancer screening includes the Pap test, an HPV test, or both. Both tests use cells taken from the cervix. Depending on the results, closer follow up or additional diagnostic testing may be recommended. If cervical changes are noted early, treatment can be given before cancer develops.

It can take 3 to 7 years for certain changes in the cells on the cervix to become cancer. The purpose of cervical cancer screening and the follow up diagnostic testing is to detect these changes while they are still easily treated.

We are grateful to Rep. Hartman for the courage to tell the story of her diagnosis and to promote awareness of HPV so that people may protect themselves and their partners. Cervical cancer is preventable. Getting the HPV vaccination and keeping current on your cervical cancer screening are the best first steps to preventing cervical cancer.