

Leadership void, not lack of money, slows efforts to address cervical cancer

November 3 2013

A study by Indiana University public health researchers found that the opportunity for significant progress in addressing cervical cancer across the country is being squandered—not because of a lack of money, but because of a void of leadership and organization at the state levels.

"We focus on [cervical cancer](#) because it is likely the 'low-hanging fruit' opportunity to beat a cancer in this generation," said Beth Meyerson, a health policy expert at the IU School of Public Health-Bloomington.

"We have the tools of HPV vaccination, screening and treatment; but uninsured women and women of color experience huge health disparities. This is the signal that we have a health system problem."

Meyerson and her research colleagues conducted interviews with 15 professionals working in programs involving cervical cancer. These included federal and state government breast and cervical cancer programs; women's health and cancer control; national advocacy organizations engaged in sexual health and cancer; legislative affairs; researchers working in cervical cancer intervention and evaluation; state coalitions engaged in cervical cancer efforts; and partners from industry working on diagnostics, therapeutics or vaccines.

The researchers identified numerous obstacles, including "paucity of state-level coordination exacerbated by a lack of cervical cancer inter-agency/program influence" that prevented comprehensive, streamlined systems of care.

A possible solution would establish state-level coordinated efforts across agencies, as done in Kentucky. Those involved would meet to set strategic goals that would align policies and programs. This would include agencies such as the state departments of health and state Medicaid programs. Addressing this likely would cost very little, Meyerson said, but the benefits would be substantial.

"The challenge is to help separately funded programs work together—a very tall charge and one that [public health](#) administration grapples with perennially," she said.

Meyerson, assistant professor in the Department of Applied Health Science and co-director of the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention, will be discussing "Identifying and exploring state policy issues in cervical cancer" during an oral poster session focused on women's [health](#) at 2:15 p.m. Nov. 3.

Provided by Indiana University

Citation: Leadership void, not lack of money, slows efforts to address cervical cancer (2013, November 3) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-11-leadership-void-lack-money-efforts.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--