



Salina Regional
Health Center

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Critically acclaimed HPV documentary film and cancer awareness event planned for January 7 at the Stiefel Theatre

(January 4, 2016) – Human papillomavirus infection may be the most widespread, misunderstood and potentially dangerous epidemic that no one knows about. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 4 out of 5 people will contract the sexually transmitted infection at some point in their lives and most will not even realize they have it. The virus is almost exclusively the cause of cervical cancer (the second leading cancer in women) and is a leading cause of head and neck and other cancers that also can affect men.

While a vaccine for HPV is available to preteens, teens and young adults that can prevent the virus, only a little more than half of teens in the United States are getting the vaccine. In Kansas, HPV vaccination rates are even worse, giving the state the distinction of being the least vaccinated state in the country for HPV.

The Tammy Walker Cancer Center at Salina Regional Health Center has planned a free HPV awareness and cancer prevention event on Thursday, January 7, at the Stiefel Theatre, 151 S. Santa Fe. Ave, Salina. The event includes a 6:30 p.m. viewing of the documentary, *Someone you Love: The HPV Epidemic*, narrated by Vanessa Williams. The film looks at the lives of five women with cervical cancer caused by HPV and the misconceptions, stigma, shame, heartbreak and pain that come with the disease.

Doors for the event open at 5 p.m. offering cancer prevention and early detection information with local physicians on hand to answer questions. Free hors d'oeuvres and

chances to win door prizes will be available. There also will be cancer survivor art and art demonstrations in conjunction with Salina Arts and Humanities' First Thursday Art Rush.

Both girls and boys can contract HPV and girls are only slightly better at getting vaccinated. The CDC estimates that only 38 percent of Kansas adolescent girls have initiated the three-part vaccination protocol and only 32 percent of Kansas boys are getting the vaccine.

Doctors recommend adolescents start getting vaccinated for HPV at age 11, long before they would be expected to become sexually active and to boost immunity. The vaccination requires three shots over a six month period to become fully effective.

January is national cervical cancer awareness month. Worldwide, cervical cancer kills more than 250,000 women every year. HPV is not just a women's cancer risk. It's estimated that nearly 30 percent of head and neck cancers in middle aged men treated at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center are also caused by HPV.

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