



January 30, 2012

SOGC WELCOMES IMMUNIZATION COMMITTEE UPDATE ON HPV VACCINES

OTTAWA (Ontario) – The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) welcomes the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's (NACI) recommendations that Canadian women between the ages of 9 and 45, as well as Canadian men between the ages of 9 and 26, be vaccinated against HPV to protect themselves against genital warts and/or various types of cancers attributed to the Human Papillomavirus.

What has changed since the publication of the SOGC's *Canadian Consensus Guidelines on Human Papillomavirus* in 2007? First, there are now two available vaccine options for Canadians – Gardasil and Cervarix. Secondly, the scope of the Gardasil vaccine has been expanded and is now approved for women up to the age of 45 as well as for males between the ages of 9 and 26. Third, the vaccines have been proven to help prevent anal cancer.

As a professional medical organization, the SOGC greatly values the rigorous, thorough and evidence-based review and analysis conducted by reputable organizations such as NACI.

"This update confirms the safety of both HPV vaccines and the importance of vaccinating both men and women to help prevent the spread of HPV," said Dr. Mark Heywood, President of the SOGC. "Now we can paint our message using a much broader brush as we can now reach out to both men and women, including more mature female patients up to the age of 45. This should help lead to an even greater reduction in the incidence of HPV and its consequences in Canada."

Notwithstanding the positive preventive outcomes attributed to HPV vaccination, the SOGC continues to emphasize the use of regular Pap smear screening in order to diagnose abnormal cervical cell activity at its earliest stages.

Given that 75% of sexually active Canadians will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime, the SOGC continues to believe in the importance of public education to ensure that people are aware of the HPV public health threat and the available prevention options.

-30-

CONTACT:

Natalie Wright

Director, Communications and Public Education,
Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)
Tel: (800) 561-2416 or 613-730-4192 extension: 366
E-mail address: nwright@sogc.com Website: www.sogc.org

About the Human papillomavirus

The Human papillomavirus is a sexually transmitted virus that is highly contagious. Because it is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity, anyone who has ever had a sexual encounter, even without penetration, can contract HPV. It is possible for someone to have HPV and not even know it because there are often no signs or symptoms.

HPV is the most prevalent sexually transmitted infection in Canada. There are more than 100 different types of HPV with at least 40 that can cause genital warts and cancers.

To learn more, visit www.hpvinfo.ca.

About the SOGC

The SOGC is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration, outreach and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in the field of sexual reproductive health. For more information, visit www.sogc.org.