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January is Cervical Health Month

Research Triangle Park, NC—The National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC), a program of the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA), recognizes January as Cervical Health Awareness Month.

Over 13,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year in the U.S and more than 4,200 die. Both in the U.S. and internationally, the disease takes the greatest toll on vulnerable populations lacking access to health care.

ASHA President Lynn Barclay says this is simply unacceptable in an era when virtually every case of cervical cancer is preventable : "Science has given us incredible life-saving tools in the form of highly accurate screening tests and safe, effective vaccines. We have the means to prevent cervical cancer: the question is do we have the will?"

Barclay notes that cervical cancer is largely a disease of poverty. "Universal access to health care is a basic human right. It's heart-breaking and outrageous that one's ability to access care to prevent cervical cancer too often comes down to privilege and wealth." She adds that access to medical care is only part of the solution: "Stigma leads many patients and health professionals alike to avoid conversations

around sexual health. Sex is healthy and natural, and our health services need to reflect that. One place to start is with ASHA's guide [Ten Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Provider about Sexual Health](#)."

For the full array of Cervical Health Awareness Month materials, including social media resources and free downloads, visit the [ASHA](#) and [NCCC](#) websites. Also follow our #CervicalHealthMonth social media outreach throughout the month via @StopHPVCancer.

The American Sexual Health Association (ASHA) is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1914 to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities, with a focus on educating about and preventing sexually transmitted infections. ASHA's educational web sites include: www.ashasexualhealth.org, www.iwannaknow.org(teen site), and www.quierosaber.org(Spanish language site).

Founded in 1996, The National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) is a program of ASHA and is a growing coalition of people coping with cervical cancer and HPV related issues. The Coalition primarily consist of women, family members, friends and caregivers, but also includes women's groups, cytotechnologists, health care providers, bio-tech companies, cancer researchers, and organizations providing cervical cancer detection programs. Their web sites are <http://www.nccc-online.org/index.html> and <http://giahc.org/>.

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