



# Nurse Practitioner Healthcare Foundation

*Improving Health Status and Quality of Care through Nurse Practitioner Innovations*

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## For Immediate Release

### **“Immunizations: Choice for Life” A Campaign to Promote Immunizations for Hispanic Adolescents**

Bellevue, WA (April 20, 2011) - The Nurse Practitioner Healthcare Foundation (NPHF) is pleased to announce the upcoming launch of a campaign, **“Immunizations: Choice for Life”**.

Immunizations are well recognized as a way to prevent needless suffering, illness, and deaths. Immunizations are safe and effective for adolescents; they not only protect the immunized adolescents but also help prevent the spread of infectious diseases to teens’ family members and friends. Immunizations for adolescents are the hepatitis B vaccine, the HPV vaccine (for females), and the meningococcal vaccine, and *catch-up* vaccines for childhood immunizations missed, including those protecting against mumps, measles, and rubella (MMR), chicken pox (varicella), pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, diphtheria, and polio.

Healthy People 2010 waged an active campaign to increase adolescent immunization rates; it *did* make a difference. This **“Immunizations: Choice for Life”** program will continue this campaign, using the updated adolescent immunization schedule and focusing specifically on Hispanic adolescents. The U.S. Office of Minority Health notes that Hispanic adolescents have lower rates of immunization than do their Caucasian counterparts against hepatitis B, influenza, pertussis, human papillomavirus (HPV), and measles/mumps/rubella (MMR). Failure to immunize adolescents means putting their lives at risk. *Now* is the time to act—to ensure that Hispanic teens learn that immunizations are a life-long commitment to their health, and that regular immunization updates are a fundamental part of their routine care.

“Adolescents are primarily healthy, and clinic visits are infrequent,” says Phyllis Zimmer, President of the NPHF. “Therefore, finding opportunities for updating adolescent immunizations is difficult. This challenge is even greater for Hispanic adolescents, many of whom lack access to appropriate care. Finding a way to engage teens in protecting their own health is even more complex. This campaign uses Hispanic social media, texting, and—it is hoped—teens *themselves* to encourage their peers to consider immunizations among the many lifelong choices they make to protect themselves and their families. We can’t protect ourselves against everything that is dangerous or undesirable. Immunizations are a *‘choice for life’* that teens can make on their own.”

“For young people today, texting and messaging via Facebook are great ways to get the word out,” adds Lois Wessel, CFNP, an NPHF consultant. “Teens are connected through social media, and they like to hear what their friends are doing. If someone says, *‘I just got the HPV vaccine and it wasn’t so bad,’* and then she sends the message to her friends, others may start asking about the vaccine.” This campaign will provide the information and resources that teens and their parents need to make good decisions.

This media campaign is a *call to action* for Hispanic adolescents to protect themselves by choosing to become immunized as teens and remain protected for a lifetime. It’s a *“choice for life.”* Spanish language resources and information will be featured, with links to up-to-date information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Immunization Action Coalition. This media campaign will start on April 18, 2011.

The **Nurse Practitioner Healthcare Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to “raising the bar” in healthcare. NPHF works on behalf of the entire nurse practitioner profession to make high quality, effective care accessible through research, education, health policy, service, and philanthropy. [www.nphealthcarefoundation.org](http://www.nphealthcarefoundation.org)

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