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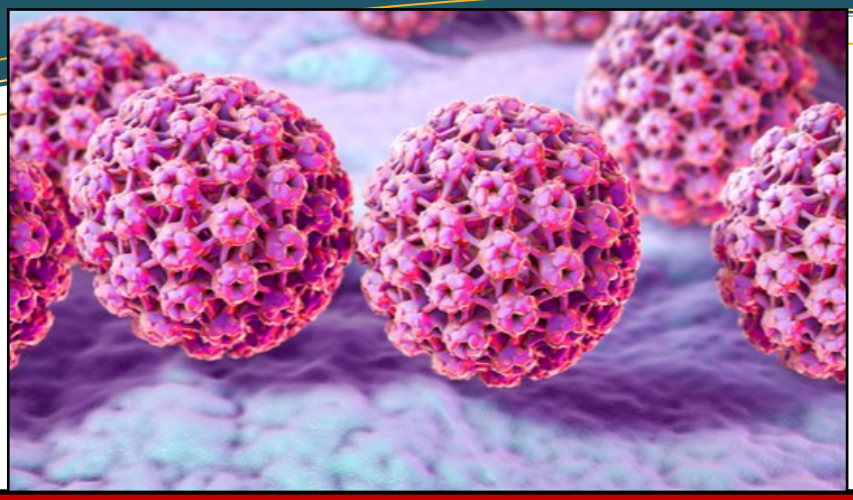
CEIP Sentinel

The Bulletin of **the California Emerging Infections Program**



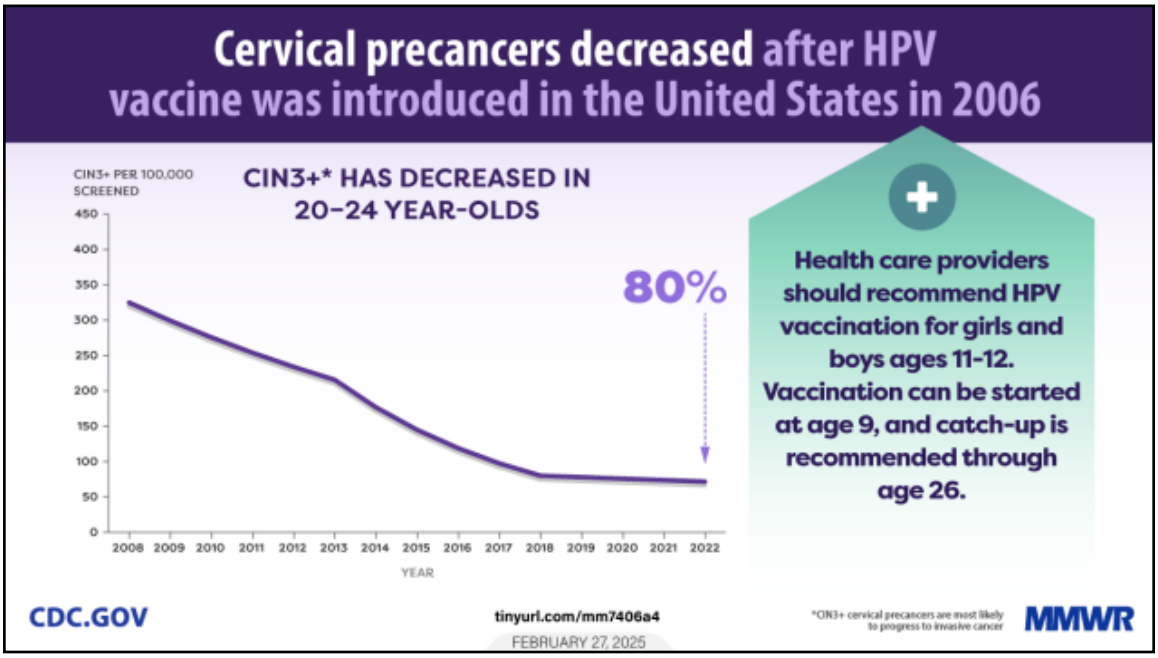
This issue:

- Cervical Precancer Decline
- Dr. Art Reingold is Retiring
- Summer Food Safety Tips
- And more!

MMWR: HPV-IMPACT Data Reveals Declines in Cervical Precancer Incidence in the US

New surveillance findings published in CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* reveal substantial nationwide declines in cervical precancers, lending strong support to the impact of widespread human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination.[1] The importance of these results reached a broad audience through mainstream coverage, including an article published by the Associated Press.[2] HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection and the body's immune system usually gets rid of the infection naturally within two years. However, certain HPV types can lead to cervical, throat, anal, vaginal, vulvar, and penile cancers.[3] HPV infection is the primary cause of cervical precancers, so preventing these lesions through vaccination is a crucial step toward significantly reducing the overall burden of cervical cancer. *Continued on next page.*

Figure 1.

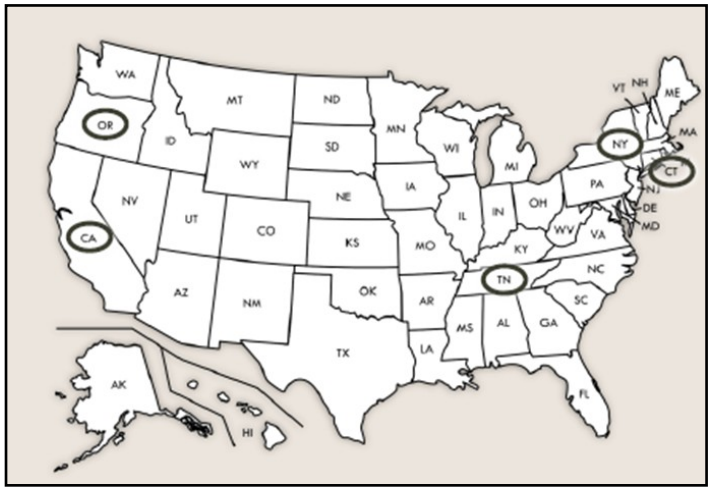


Public Health Updates

MMWR HPV-IMPACT Report (continued)

The report analyzes surveillance data collected between 2008 and 2022 from five HPV-IMPACT population-based sites across the US, including Alameda County, California, where surveillance efforts are conducted through the CEIP. Notable declines were observed in cervical precancer rates, especially among women aged 20–24 years, which is the age group most likely to have been vaccinated during adolescence. Substantial reductions in cervical precancer incidence highlight the direct role HPV vaccination plays in preventing cervical precancers and, consequently, reducing the risk of progression to cervical cancer (Figure 1).

The HPV-IMPACT sites



The significant declines observed in younger women align closely with the timeline of the U.S. HPV vaccination program, which was first recommended in 2006 for girls aged 11–12 years, with catch-up vaccination available through age 26 years if not previously vaccinated.[4] Receiving the vaccine at these early ages before exposure to HPV has been especially effective in preventing the development of high-grade cervical lesions. Initially, there were slight increases in CIN2+ incidence among women aged 25–64 years, which were attributed primarily to shifts in cervical cancer screening practices, such as longer intervals between screenings and the adoption of more sensitive HPV testing. However, surveillance indicated these upward trends reversed or leveled by 2017. Cervical cancer screening with HPV testing and/or Pap smears, per recommended guidelines, remains an important component of cervical cancer prevention. New developments in specimen self-collection may offer additional avenues to ensure screening is available to all those with a cervix.

This report affirms the continued importance and success of HPV vaccination as a public health strategy. The substantial reduction in cervical precancers provides robust evidence supporting current CDC recommendations for routine HPV vaccination at ages 11–12 years, with catch-up vaccinations continuing through age 26 years. The observed declines highlight the benefit of widespread HPV immunization in preventing cervical precancers and reinforce the vaccine's critical role in the broader goals of cervical cancer prevention and elimination.[5,6]

1. http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7406a4
2. https://apnews.com/article/hpv-gardasil-vaccine-cervical-cancer-kennedy-32cdcf325d12cbc6610f01430d4ee82b
3. https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/hpv/basic-information.html
4. https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/hcp/recommendations.html
5. https://www.who.int/initiatives/cervical-cancer-elimination-initiative
6. https://pressroom.cancer.org/HPVcancerfreelaunch

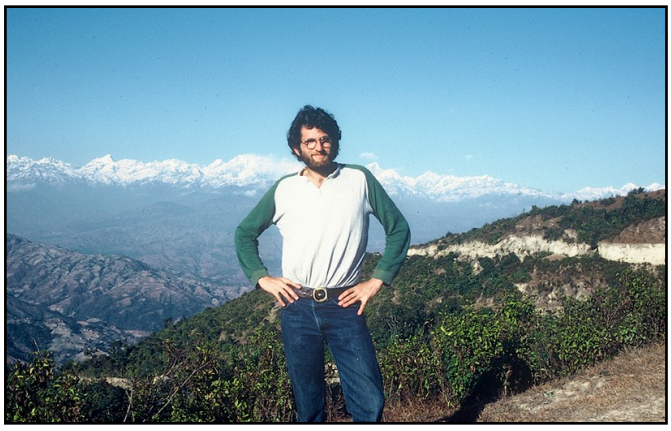
Summarized by Deborah Adeyemi & Erin Whitney, HPV-IMPACT Staff

Art Reingold is Retiring (sort of)!

Dr. Art Reingold, together with partners at the state and local health departments, initiated the California Emerging Infections Program (CEIP) in 1995, and he has been Co-Director for the past 30 years! Art also previously initiated the San Francisco Bay Area Bacterial and Mycotics Surveillance Project in 1989, which provided a foundation for the CEIP and its Active Bacterial Core Surveillance (ABCs) project.

Art began his path to public health as an MD/PhD student at the University of Chicago. After completing his residency in internal medicine he realized that his original plan to be a laboratory-based biomedical researcher wasn't the right path for him, and he began his career in public health at CDC as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officer in 1979. His future career in public health was decided when he gained experience and became skilled at investigating various infectious diseases as a CDC field officer in Connecticut. Perhaps his most rewarding outbreak investigation/medical detective work in his Connecticut role involved the identification of an oral surgeon who was inadvertently infecting his patients with hepatitis B virus. Art learned the difficulty and complexity of conducting such investigations and making decisions based on the data; the outcome of the investigation prevented further HBV infections.

Art became convinced by that experience that public health work was more in keeping with his interests and problem-solving abilities. While working at CDC, he contributed to many national and international public health investigations, including the infamous tampon-associated Staphylococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS) and many studies of the effectiveness of various vaccines.



Art moved on to academic pursuits in 1987 as a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health. During the last 38 years, he has chaired the Epidemiology Division of the School of Public Health and chaired or been a member of multiple national and global health committees, including committees of the World Health Organization (WHO), the National Academy of Medicine, CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC), providing insight as a subject matter expert on numerous urgent public health issues. He believes that the actions and recommendations of these committees have led to real improvements in public health, and he is proud to have been a "cog in the wheel".

Continued on the next page.

Art Reingold is Retiring (sort of)!

Working with and mentoring post-docs and graduate and undergraduate students has been one of the most rewarding parts of his career. He has been privileged to teach and work with extraordinary students and see them move on to the important work they do nationally and globally in medicine, research, and public health.

Art with Pam Daily Kirley, RESP-NET Project Manager, and Gretchen Rotchrock, former Associate Director, 2024

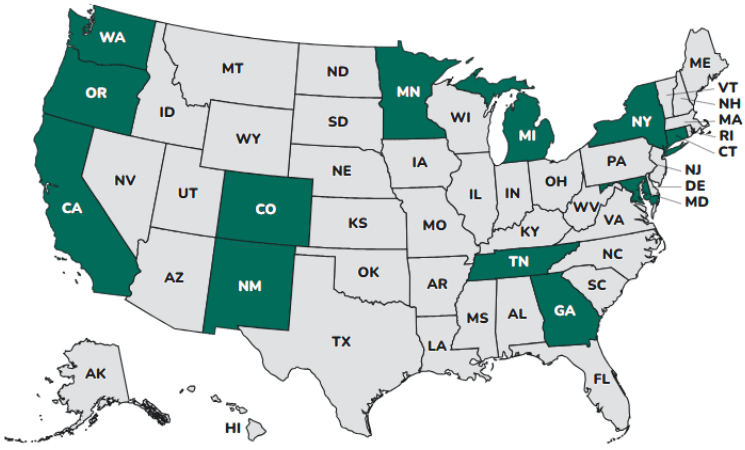
Art commented that over the course of his career, there have been enormous changes in the field of public health, including data use and modernization, improvements in laboratory science technology, and of course the ebb and flow of the resources needed to support national, state and local public health efforts. The lack of stability of public health funding continues, but he has found hope in the increasingly educated and dedicated front line public health professionals he has had the privilege to work with.

Art's advice for the next generation of public health professionals is to "Hang in there and try to be less irritating and better dressed than me!"

Thank you Art, for your enormous contributions to identifying and preventing infectious disease threats, and for mentoring and preparing those who are the future of public health!

Interviewed by Pam Daily Kirley, RESP-NET Project Manager

There are 11 other Emerging Infection Program sites through the US!



https://www.cdc.gov/emerging-infections-program/php/eip-sites/index.html

CEIP 30th Anniversary: Where Are They Now?

Ashley Dockter—Research Assistant & Project Operations Officer, 2011-2016

Ashley worked at CEIP from 2011 to 2016, starting as a graduate intern on FoodNet before becoming a Research Assistant with the Healthcare Associated Infections Program after earning her MPH from UC Berkeley. In 2013, she transitioned to Project Operations Officer for HPV-Impact, a joint role with CEIP and CDPH. Her time at CEIP launched her public health career, offering hands-on experience in surveillance, data analysis, and stakeholder coordination.

Currently, Ashley is the Evaluation and Quality Improvement Unit Chief at CDPH's STD Control Branch, where she leads evaluation projects and supports STI prevention initiatives. Previously, she spent six years as the Congenital Syphilis Program Coordinator, overseeing multiple statewide prevention efforts. With 13 years in public health, Ashley brings extensive experience in surveillance, project management, and leadership. She's passionate about using data to drive impact, improve systems, and empower teams. Outside of work, she enjoys outdoor adventures with her husband, two kids, and dog, Red.

Stella Morris—Public Health Investigator, 2017-2020

Stella Morris began her public health career as a Public Health Investigator with CEIP, a role that helped launch her into her current position at the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH). At CEIP, she conducted interviews with Salmonella and Shigella case-patients as part of FoodNet's Case Exposure Assessment Project—a collaboration between CEIP, SFDPH, and the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD). Through this role, Stella gained valuable on-the-ground experience by working directly within the physical offices of both health departments and becoming an integrated member of their teams.

After over two years with CEIP, Stella was hired as a permanent Disease Control Investigator with SFDPH's Communicable Disease (CD) program. She now serves as the CD Health Program Coordinator. Stella is passionate about public health and finds it rewarding to be part of a team dedicated to improving population health and preventing the spread of communicable diseases. She thrives in the ever-evolving nature of the field, where every day brings something new. Outside of work, Stella draws inspiration from her two children, who keep life just as dynamic and full of surprises.

Gar-Wei Lee — Research Assistant & Surveillance Officer, 2015-2018

Gar-Wei began her public health career at CEIP shortly after earning her MPH, spending three years supporting research studies, including one on maternal Tdap vaccination and infant pertussis prevention. That experience laid the foundation for her current role as the lead pertussis epidemiologist at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Immunization Branch. There, she monitors disease trends and supports local health jurisdictions in case and outbreak management.

Before this role, Gar-Wei coordinated a CDPH research project on antimicrobial resistance in shigellosis treatment—work that drew directly on her CEIP background. She also contributed to CDPH's COVID-19 emergency response as an epidemiologist and media specialist. Outside of work, Gar-Wei enjoys time with her partner and cats, playing in community orchestras, and horseback riding.

New Staff Introductions

Chaman Kaur — Clinical Informatics Specialist

Chaman is excited to join CEIP! She comes from the Informatics Branch (IB), where she worked extensively with COVID-19 data and, more recently, with communicable disease data on a broader scale. At IB, Chaman developed disease-agnostic data pipeline infrastructure utilizing Snowflake SQL, Snowpark Python, and RShiny. She was also actively involved in designing and implementing process monitoring capabilities for new and expanded infrastructure through Snowflake dashboards and Shiny Apps.

Beyond her professional work, Chaman volunteers with a non-profit organization that creates children's books aimed at promoting cultural awareness and representation. She is also a busy mom of two! Chaman looks forward to contributing to the team and collaborating with everyone at CEIP.

Zhipeng Zhu — Clinical Informatics Specialist

Zhipeng lives in Seattle and has a background in data science and physics. He works within the Reporting & Analytics Unit within the Informatics Branch at the California Department of Public Health. He loves basketball, sci-fi , gaming, and has the cutest Shiba named Mochi. He's very excited to work with the CEIP team.

Introducing CEIP's New Associate Director—Joelle Nadle

Joelle Nadle studied biology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and received her Masters of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. After serving two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco, Joelle joined CEIP in 1997. Her first job at CEIP was to coordinate surveillance for *Cryptosporidium*, a project funded by local water utilities. Over the years Joelle has played multiple roles at CEIP, established surveillance systems for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), carbapenemase-resistant Enterobacterales (CRE), and *Candida* bloodstream infections, and coordinated multiple studies.

Joelle lives in Oakland, has two adult children, two dogs, and a cat (who really belongs to her daughter), and in her free time likes to garden, thrift, be outdoors, and read.

Just in time for summer...

Summer Cooking and Food Safety

The steaks are high...use these tips to stay safe!

Tip 1: Clean

- Wash your hands:
  - Before and after eating.
  - After touching poultry/uncooked meat, seafood, flour, or eggs.
- Wash utensils, cutting boards, and countertops after preparing food.
- Rinse your fresh fruits and veggies!

Tip 2: Separate

- At the store, pick up meat, poultry, and seafood last.
- Separate meat, poultry, and seafood from other food items in your cart.

Tip 3: Cook

Remember safe minimum internal cooking temperatures when preparing your favorite meal:

145°F	Beef, Pork, Lamb, Veal (Rest for 3 Minutes)
145°F	Fish and Shellfish
160°F	Ground Meats
165°F	Poultry
165°F	Casseroles + Leftovers

Tip 4: Chill

- Keep meat, poultry, and fish in the fridge until you are ready to cook.
- Keep coolers at 40°F or colder.
- Store leftovers in shallow containers with lids.
- Put leftovers in the fridge within 2 hours of cooking (or 1 hour if it's above 90°F outside!)

Remember: Don't Cross Contaminate!

- Throw out marinades that have touched raw meat.
- Serve cooked meat on a clean plate.

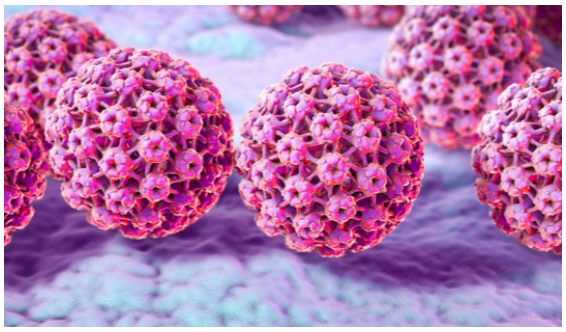
References:

- https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/prevention/
- https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/pdfs/grill-safety-infographic-508c.pdf
- https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/safe-temperature-chart

Contributed by MJ Mocarski, FoodNet Epidemiologist

The California Emerging Infections Program (CEIP), a program of Heluna Health, is a joint project of the California Department of Public Health, U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in collaboration with the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, San Francisco Department of Public Health, Contra Costa County Health Services Department, and the City of Berkeley Health and Human Services Department.

Cover Image



Credit: California Department of Public Health

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