

To whom it may concern,

Project Title: Head & Neck Cancer Screening and HPV Vaccination Event at a Community Wellness Center in Urban Los Angeles

Summary:

The proposed project involves a head and neck cancer (HNC) screening and HPV vaccination event hosted at an urban Los Angeles community wellness center associated with the LA County + University of Southern California (LAC+USC) Medical Center. The event will have four components: 1) a survey focused on demographic information, lifestyle, and risk factors for HNC; 2) a survey focused on knowledge and opinions regarding the human papillomavirus (HPV), the Gardasil vaccine, and the virus's relationship to HNC; 3) a HNC screening examination; and 4) the opportunity to start a Gardasil vaccination series.

Background/Significance:

Head and neck cancer (HNC) carries a significant risk of morbidity and mortality if not identified early in its clinical course. Community education regarding HNC risk factors, prevention, and early detection are therefore of the utmost importance. Los Angeles County (LAC) is an especially challenging environment to provide this type of outreach and care. The county is not only among the country's most diverse in terms of race, socioeconomic status, and culture, but also has tremendous disparities in health literacy and access to health care. The patients that seek care at LAC+USC medical center are no exception. In fact, they are among the most vulnerable in the county - requiring the most resources and care. As health care providers in this setting, we experience the consequences of neglected patients with advanced disease states daily as we attempt to provide care to patients in a system filled with inadequacies and shortcomings. In this role, we also have a unique opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the well being of our patients and their families. In most instances, we are their only option for quality care and therefore, have a responsibility to meet their health needs and provide them the education and resources necessary to stay healthy and safe.

It is with this perspective in mind that we designed a HNC screening event. We understand that this event may be our one chance to speak with these community members about HNC and know that we must take advantage of the opportunity. Therefore, our goal is to not to provide a one-time screening examination, but rather to offer a comprehensive event in which participants will be provided with the information and resources they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle, free of HNC, for years to come. Our goal is to offer an event in which we provide education on HNC; offer preventative care through screening exams; and provide an opportunity for participants to improve their health by initiating an HPV vaccination series and protecting themselves against HNC.

Aims/Expected Outcome:

Aim 1. Through survey data, we aim to better understand the following about our patient population: the most common risk factors for HNC, and their understanding and opinions regarding HPV, the Gardasil vaccine and the virus's connection to HNC. By educating ourselves about our patients, we hope to better understand how to meet their needs and provide the best possible health care. We will achieve this aim by conducting descriptive statistical analysis of our survey results. *Aim 2.* Through educational pamphlets and direct discussion with event participants, we aim to raise awareness and provide education about HNC signs and symptoms, risk factors for HNC with an emphasis on HPV, and how to seek appropriate care if you have concerns about yourself or a family member. We also aim to raise awareness and dispel falsehoods regarding the safety and importance of HPV vaccines in preventing HNC. We will assess this aim through a brief survey administered before the participant leaves that focuses on basic facts about HNC covered by the educational material reviewed with participants. *Aim 3:* Improve HPV vaccination rates within our patient population by offering HPV vaccinations to participants. We will assess this aim by calculating the rate of vaccination series initiated and completed among the eligible participants. Overall, we aim to include 100 participants and initiate 20 vaccination series. We anticipate that participants will gain a better understanding of HNC risk factors, methods of prevention and early detection. And we hope to improve our understanding of our patient population to provide superior care.

Setting/Target Population:

The event will be held at The Wellness Center at the LAC+USC Medical Center, a community center located in East Los Angeles that hosts educational programs for the general public and is focused on preventative health care. Our target population is teenagers and adults living in the downtown and east Los Angeles area, particularly those who access the LAC+USC Medical Center for care.

Methods/Logistics:

The event will be hosted on a single weekday afternoon to maximize the community members already on the medical campus. We plan to optimize turnout by advertising for the 1 month prior. We will distribute fliers to the LAC+USC pharmacies, pediatric and primary care clinics, urgent care center, and emergency department. We will do the same at several nearby hospitals. Participants will begin by filling out two surveys electronically on kindle tablets. One survey will focus on demographics, lifestyle, and HNC risk factors. The other will focus on HPV knowledge, opinions on the Gardasil vaccination and vaccination status, and the connection between HPV and HNC. The participant will then undergo a HNC screening examination and then have an opportunity to be vaccinated against HPV if they qualify and are interested. We will provide educational pamphlets on HNC, HPV and how to seek care at LAC+USC. We will review the documents with them when they arrive and before they leave. All educational materials and surveys will be reviewed by our supervising head and neck surgeon and produced in English and Spanish. We will recruit LAC+USC translators to assist with communication on the day of the event. The event logistics will be managed by the author of this grant and leaders of the Keck School of Medicine Otolaryngology Student Interest Group. Medical student volunteers will assist participants with surveys and perform screening exams. The event will be supervised by USC otolaryngology residents and a head and neck attending. The logistics of obtaining and distributing HPV vaccinations will be managed by leadership of the LAC+USC vaccination clinic. Vaccinations will be given based on current guidelines and only to patients who have insurance in the LA County Department of Health Services network. Those that get vaccinated will have follow up appointments scheduled for their 2nd and 3rd doses at either the vaccination clinic or the LAC+USC otolaryngology clinic – depending on availability. Survey results will be compiled into an electronic database for descriptive analysis.

Costs:

We anticipate that this event will cost approximately \$2000. The total cost will depend on the amount of funding available for advertising. This grant will cover the costs of advertising before the event (fliers, brochures) and major rental items during the event including a pop-up tent for makeshift exam/vaccination rooms. Lastly, we will need funding to produce educational pamphlets on HNC to distribute at the event. Medical supplies will be provided by the LAC+USC Otolaryngology Department.

Other Funding:

No other funding. The Keck School of Medicine Otolaryngology Student Interest Group may be able to support the event in some capacity, but this is not confirmed. The LAC+USC wellness community center is unable to fund our project, nor is the LAC+USC Department of Otolaryngology. This grant would ensure that we are able to advertise sufficiently, rent our necessary items, and produce high quality educational products for the event. We would greatly appreciate the financial support from AHNS to maximize the success of our event.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jonathan West, MD
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LAC+USC Medical Center/Keck Medicine of USC