

To the American Head and Neck Society Cancer Prevention Service,

HPV-associated oropharyngeal HNSCC is expected to represent 50% of all worldwide HNSCC by 2030. Despite expert-driven concern for an epidemic of HPV-related malignancy, there is a lack of population and provider awareness of epidemiologic shifts in head and neck cancer particularly in the Midwest. This proposal "HPV and Head and Neck Cancer: A Patient and Provider Multimedia Education Series" seeks funding to implement a webinar-based educational program aimed at improving patient and referring provider awareness of HPV-related head and neck cancer and early diagnosis. This letter, on behalf of the Division of Head and Neck Oncology at the University of Michigan Department of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, is for the 2025 Cancer Prevention Community Service Awards to support this educational series.

Webinar-Based Initiative Target Population:

- 1. **Referring Providers:** Primary care, family medicine, general otolaryngology, and dentistry providers in Michigan/broader Midwest region are often the first to encounter the adult patient with a neck mass. Evidence-based educational initiatives targeting these diverse healthcare providers in our region are lacking.
- 2. **Patients:** Recorded video series can be referenced by patients and caregivers and will address HPV transmission, prevention (including vaccination), early detection, treatment options, and the impact of head and neck cancers on quality of life.

Methods to be Used:

The project will involve a Friday lunch hour interactive webinar series developed in collaboration with local medical and dental professionals to engage both patients and healthcare providers (see Table 1). Webinars will be recorded, edited, and made available online to be referenced by the target population. High-quality fact sheets and slides used during the webinar will also be available in PDF form.

Table 1: HPV and Head and Neck Cancer Webinar Series Topics

	Provider Series	Moderator	Patient Series
12:00pm	Evaluation of the Asymptomatic Neck Mass: When to be Concerned for Cancer	Dr. Pratyusha Yalamanchi	What is HPV-related Head and Neck Cancer? Overview of HPV Transmission and Prevention including Vaccination
12:20pm	Incidence & Risk Factors for Oropharynx Cancer: Changing demographics due to the HPV Virus	Dr. Marisa Buchakjian	
12:40pm	Treatment of Oropharynx Cancer: Is surgery always indicated?	Dr. David Forner	Early Detection and Treatment Options for HPV-Related Head and Neck Cancer
1:00pm	Outcomes and Surveillance for Oropharynx; Emerging Concepts for Screening	Dr. Molly Heft-Neal	Impact of Head and Neck Cancers on Patients' Quality Of Life

Expected Outcome:

This proposal aims to (1) increase recognition of the persistent adult neck mass as a potential presentation of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancers among patients, primary care, and other referring providers and (2) promote timely medical evaluation and referral for early diagnosis. The series is structured to foster awareness among patients and referring providers to facilitate potential prevention

through vaccination, and expedient referral for diagnosis and management. The resulting multimedia educational materials will serve as a digital provider “toolkit” for patient-focused communication on prevention, diagnostic algorithm, and evidence-based treatment. Participating providers and patients will be surveyed prior to and at the conclusion of the webinar series to identify knowledge gaps and community needs to guide additional content.

Expected Impact on Community Health and Knowledge:

The distinct clinical presentation of an asymptomatic, cystic neck mass in younger, non-smoking adult populations represents a paradigm shift compared to non-HPV associated head and neck squamous cell carcinoma, that contributes to diagnostic delays and increased therapeutic and

financial burden. This can be attributed to patient delays (i.e. from symptom onset to presentation to a provider) and professional delays defined as prolonged time from initial consultation to pathologic diagnosis (Figure 1). Previously identified professional delays in diagnosis of head and neck malignancy at our institution include lack of primary care awareness of signs and symptoms, inappropriate reassurances by healthcare providers, and erroneous treatment for infectious or reflux etiologies. This webinar-based educational series seeks to educate the local patient and referring provider community on the epidemiology and clinical management of HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancers to address these delays.

This educational video series is designed for both referring healthcare providers and patients, offering targeted education on the rising incidence of HPV related oropharyngeal cancer and real-world challenges in diagnosis at treatment via an interactive platform for sharing knowledge and best practices. Through engaging and informative webinar content and related digital materials, the series addresses HPV transmission, prevention (including vaccination), early detection, and treatment options to improve timely management.

The estimated/actual cost, of the project:

We estimate that \$1,000 requested will cover the cost of the project and no other funding is anticipated.

Thank you for our consideration.

Figure 1: The Adult Neck Mass Diagnostic Process and Sources of Delay

