



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Indianapolis, IN 46202

16 Feb 2025

To: American Head and Neck Society Cancer Prevention Service Community Service Awards Committee

Re: 2025 AHNS Cancer Prevention Service Community Service Award Application

Dear Members of the AHNS Cancer Prevention Service:

We are excited to submit our application for the 2025 AHNS Cancer Prevention Community Service Award, highlighting a collaborative effort to address critical gaps in head and neck cancer (HNC) prevention. Our team, made up of medical students, residents, and faculty from the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at Indiana University School of Medicine, is committed to advancing head and neck cancer prevention through creative, community-focused solutions.

Last year, the inaugural Indianapolis Head and Neck Cancer Community Screening Day was held at the IU Student Outreach Clinic (IUSOC), providing free HNC screenings to over 25 Indianapolis residents with the help of a university grant. Building on this foundation, this year's expanded event will also take place at the IUSOC to continue offering accessible care to underserved communities at a known, trusted location. Located in the 46201 zip code, one of the most impoverished urban neighborhoods in central Indiana, the IUSOC serves as a critical safety net for the community. Over 26% of residents in this zip code live below the Federal Poverty Line, over double the rate experienced by Americans nationally. Unfortunately, this zip code also scores lowest on health outcomes among the eight neighboring regions in the Indianapolis metropolitan area based on a report by the Community Health Network system. Depressed high school graduation rates and limited access to health insurance further compound this issue; ultimately, this region's residents face the third-lowest life expectancy (70.5 years) of the 104 zip codes in the Indianapolis Metro Statistical Area, underscoring the urgent need for preventive healthcare interventions such as this. The IU Student Outreach Center has established itself as a trusted and staple resource in the community, providing consistent, reliable care for underserved populations.

This year's initiative will expand upon last year's program by offering free HNC screenings, HPV vaccinations, and educational outreach in this uniquely underserved population. To maximize our impact, local organizations, including a convenience store, a worship center, and an afterschool community center in the Indianapolis area, have agreed to amplify our messaging through electronic signage and physical advertisements. These partnerships will help us increase word-of-mouth awareness of our event and engage individuals who face barriers to accessing healthcare and may not otherwise seek preventive care. We also plan to reach out to local radio stations and news organizations to assist with community outreach.

Additionally, we are collaborating with the IU School of Dentistry to leverage their existing infrastructure and expertise in oral health. This partnership will enhance our event by providing

additional dental screenings and oral health education, further demonstrating our comprehensive approach to community care.

Our initiative will include:

- Free HNC screenings and dental screenings conducted by our dedicated faculty, residents, and medical students
- On-site HPV vaccinations provided in partnership with the Indiana Department of Health to reduce HPV-associated cancers
- Wallet-sized cards featuring key warning signs of HNC, along with QR codes that link to resources on vaccination, smoking cessation, and educational videos
- Goodie bags for each patient with toothbrushes, toothpaste, healthy snacks, and floss to promote oral health
- Accessible educational materials, available in both physical and digital formats

Our team's primary goal is to engage medically underserved individuals in Indianapolis who have limited access to preventive healthcare. By targeting these communities, we aim to target disparities in HNC prevention and advance early detection.

We anticipate the following outcomes:

- Providing free screenings and HPV vaccinations to at least 100 individuals
- Identifying patients in need of follow-up care and connecting them with ENT providers
- Equipping attendees with essential knowledge about HNC prevention.

We hope to go beyond immediate health benefits: by fostering early detection of HNC and increasing HPV vaccination uptake, we aim to improve community health outcomes over a longer window while identifying effective ways to engage underserved populations in cancer prevention.

The estimated cost of this project is \$1,500, which will cover event materials, HPV vaccination support, and educational resources. We are requesting \$1,000 from the AHNS Community Service Award to help fund these efforts, which align with the AHNS mission of prevention and early detection and help improve community health.

Thank you very much for considering our proposal, and please reach out if you have any questions or you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,

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