

Dear American Head and Neck Society Cancer Prevention Service Committee,

I am pleased to submit this proposal, “HPV Vaccination Initiative at the Brooklyn Free Clinic,” to expand access to HPV vaccination for uninsured adults in Brooklyn, New York.

Target Population

The Anne Kastor Brooklyn Free Clinic provides primary care to uninsured individuals every Wednesday evening at the University Hospital at Downstate. Many of our patients are undocumented or experience fragmented access to healthcare, limiting access to preventive services such as vaccination.

In 2025, our team conducted a quality improvement assessment evaluating HPV vaccination documentation, counseling, and administration. Among 192 patients aged 18–45 years, vaccination status was documented in 61 visits (32%), while 131 visits (68%) lacked documentation. Documentation differed markedly by gender: 47% of female patients had documented vaccination status compared with 6% of male patients. Among the 61 patients with documented status, 24 (39%) reported no prior vaccination, and only 8 of those (33%) received the vaccine during their visit.

These findings demonstrate significant missed opportunities for HPV-related cancer prevention, particularly among uninsured male patients at increasing risk for HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer. They underscore the need to strengthen outreach, counseling, and vaccine access within our community. As part of an ongoing quality improvement initiative, documentation training and an HPV vaccine registry are already in place to support accurate recording and series completion; this proposal focuses specifically on expanding outreach, enhancing counseling, and increasing vaccine access.

Methods

This April, the Brooklyn Free Clinic, in collaboration with the SUNY Downstate Department of Otolaryngology, will launch an HPV vaccination initiative. While the week will also include a head and neck cancer screening component, this proposal focuses specifically on expanding HPV vaccination education and access.

From April 13–15, 2026, we will host outreach tables in the East Flatbush neighborhood surrounding Downstate to provide HPV vaccination education and offer on-site appointment scheduling. Our goal is to increase awareness and directly connect uninsured adults to free vaccination services at the Brooklyn Free Clinic, while encouraging insured individuals to discuss HPV vaccination with their primary care physicians.

Eligible uninsured adults will receive the HPV vaccine at no cost at the Brooklyn Free Clinic. Dedicated appointments will be available on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, with continued availability on subsequent clinic nights to support accessibility and completion of the vaccine series. This approach builds on a prior outreach event held on World Skin Health Day, during which community members received skin cancer education and scheduled free skin examinations at the Brooklyn Free Clinic.

That evening, we will also conduct a structured HPV vaccine counseling workshop for medical student volunteers during the clinic’s weekly education session. The training will review the association between HPV infection and HPV-related cancers, current CDC vaccination guidelines, and evidence-based, patient-centered counseling strategies. Emphasis will be placed on addressing vaccine hesitancy, correcting misconceptions, and engaging in culturally sensitive discussions. Additional sessions will be offered throughout the year to ensure broader participation and sustained impact.

Expected Outcome & Impact

We anticipate increasing vaccine initiation and completion among uninsured adults, improving documentation and counseling consistency, and reducing gender disparities in vaccination discussions.

This initiative advances cancer prevention at its earliest stage within a high-risk, underserved population. By combining targeted outreach, free vaccination access, and structured counseling training, this program aims to reduce disparities in HPV-associated head and neck cancer while strengthening the preventive care infrastructure at the Brooklyn Free Clinic. In parallel, it will educate and empower medical trainees to deliver evidence-based HPV counseling and to advocate for equitable cancer prevention for the patients they serve.

Estimated Cost

The clinic has the capacity to administer HPV vaccines at no cost. Support from the American Head and Neck Society will expand outreach, enhance education, and help kickstart this initiative as a sustainable annual program.

Funds will support:

Printed educational materials for patients and students	\$300	Single-use, undated
Posters and signage for tabling	\$250	Single-use, dated
Tablecloths for outreach tables	\$200	Reuseable
Tabling materials to increase community engagement and foot traffic	\$250	Single-use
Total Cost	\$1000	

Additional Funding

The Brooklyn Free Clinic will provide in-kind support including clinic space, staffing, operations, and vaccine procurement. The Department of Otolaryngology will assist with outreach and education. No external funding currently supports this initiative.

Thank you for your consideration. Please reach out if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

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