

Dear Members of the American Head and Neck Society Cancer Prevention Service,

I am writing to apply for the 2026 Cancer Prevention Community Service Award in support of a cancer prevention initiative at University Hospitals (UH) Cleveland Medical Center and its affiliated community clinics. This project will take place in conjunction with the Cleveland **Homeless Stand Down** event and is designed to improve access to HPV vaccination among a medically underserved population with limited access to preventive healthcare.

Homeless Stand Down is a city-wide event focused on providing a broad range of resources to the unhoused population of Cleveland, with prior years bringing in over 2,000 attendees. University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center has participated in this event for the past five years through annual head and neck cancer screening efforts. We are applying for this award to enhance and expand our preventive offerings by incorporating on-site HPV vaccination into our established screening presence.

### **Targeted Population**

The primary population served will be individuals experiencing homelessness in Cleveland, Ohio who attend the Homeless Stand Down event. This population often faces substantial barriers to preventive healthcare, including limited primary care access, fragmented follow-up, transportation challenges, and lower vaccination rates. As a result, opportunities for cancer prevention are frequently missed.

### **Project Description and Methods**

This initiative focuses on delivering **on-site HPV vaccination and targeted education** during the Homeless Stand Down event, while strengthening our existing head and neck cancer screening efforts.

At the event, our team will:

#### **1. Provide On-Site HPV Vaccination**

Eligible participants who are not up to date on HPV vaccination will be offered the vaccine on-site. We will assess eligibility, provide clear counseling regarding HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer prevention, and administer the first dose when appropriate. Participants will receive written instructions for follow-up doses through UH clinics or community health partners to support series completion.

#### **2. Deliver Focused Education on Head and Neck Cancer Prevention**

In conjunction with our established screening efforts, we will provide brief, accessible education regarding:

- The link between HPV and oropharyngeal cancer
- Early signs and symptoms of head and neck cancer
- The importance of preventive care and timely evaluation of concerning symptoms

Educational materials will be written in clear, patient-centered language and tailored to the needs of individuals experiencing housing insecurity.

### **3. Strengthen Sustainable Prevention Pathways**

Building on our five-year presence at this event, we will refine a simple documentation and referral framework to better connect participants to follow-up care within UH clinics when needed. This approach ensures that vaccination and screening efforts extend beyond a single outreach encounter.

#### **Expected Outcomes**

We anticipate:

- Increased HPV vaccine initiation among eligible attendees
- Enhanced integration of vaccination into our established head and neck screening model
- Improved participant understanding of HPV-related head and neck cancer risk
- Strengthened linkage between vulnerable community members and UH follow-up services

#### **Expected Impact on Community Health**

By delivering HPV vaccination directly within a trusted, high-attendance community event, this project reduces structural barriers to cancer prevention. Expanding our long-standing screening efforts to include vaccination represents a meaningful enhancement of preventive services for a population with historically limited access to care. Increasing HPV vaccination uptake among individuals experiencing homelessness has the potential to reduce future HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer burden while reinforcing UH's commitment to health equity and community partnership.

#### **Evaluation**

We will track:

- Number of individuals screened for HPV vaccination eligibility
- Number of HPV vaccine doses administered on-site
- Number of participants provided with follow-up instructions
- Participant engagement during head and neck screening and education

#### **Budget**

The total estimated project cost is **\$1,000**, which will be used directly to purchase HPV vaccine doses for administration at the Homeless Stand Down event. Any remaining funds will support educational materials and vaccine coordination.

#### **Other Funding**

No additional funding has been secured for this project.

This initiative aligns closely with the mission of the AHNS Cancer Prevention Service by expanding access to evidence-based cancer prevention within a high-risk, underserved population. Thank you for your consideration and for supporting community-centered strategies that advance head and neck cancer prevention and early detection.

Sincerely,  
Claire Gleadhill  
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Cleveland, Ohio