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National Hispanic Medical Association

January 29, 2021

The Honorable Katherine Castor
U.S House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Castor,

On behalf of the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), a nonprofit representing over 50,000 physicians committed to improving the health of Hispanics and other underserved communities, we strongly support the Promoting Resources to Expand Vaccination, Education, and New Treatments for HPV Cancers Act of 2020 (PREVENT HPV Cancers Act of 2020) that was introduced by Congresswoman Katherine Castor. The PREVENT HPV Cancers Act of 2020 will support a national campaign to increase awareness, combat misinformation, and increase HPV vaccination rates.

It is well known that one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the United States, for both men and women, is the human papillomavirus (HPV). About 35,000 cases of cancer are caused by HPV annually, with the most common being cervical, anal, and oropharynx cancer. Compared to women of other races and ethnicities, Hispanic women have disproportionately higher rates of HPV-associated cervical cancer. There is also growing evidence that Hispanic women have been developing HPV-associated cervical cancer at an earlier age. Currently, certain populations are less likely to receive the HPV vaccine which has led to only about one-half of adolescents being completely vaccinated against HPV.

We recognize that there is a safe and proven vaccine for HPV and that most HPV infections that can lead to cancer can be prevented by vaccines. As a result, it is imperative that the national campaign increase awareness and work to increase vaccination rates in Hispanic and other communities of color. While the vaccine for HPV can be administered up until the age of 45, it is most effective when administered between the ages of 11 and 12. Therefore, an increase in HPV awareness will allow for more people to be aware of the dangers of HPV and take action earlier by vaccinating. Without this, Hispanic communities will continue to suffer from HPV-associated cancer which subsequently creates family stress and financial hardship.

NHMA is a national association that represents over 50,000 physicians who are committed to improving the health of Hispanics and other underserved communities. We support the PREVENT HPV Cancers Act of 2020 because it will ultimately improve the health and quality of life in our Hispanic and other underserved communities.

For any questions, please contact me at (202) 628-5895.

Sincerely,

Elena Rios, MD, MSPH, FACP

President & CEO

National Hispanic Medical Association