

Does Legislation to Increase Uptake of HPV Vaccine in Teens lead to Their Increased Sexual Behavior?

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There are many strategies to increase human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination in teens, but one of the most potent is through legislative requirements.

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There are many strategies to increase human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination in teens, but one of the most potent is through legislative requirements. As a result, 24 states have now enacted legislation regarding HPV vaccination and education, but not without concerns from some families that doing so will only promote promiscuous sexual activity. Are these concerns valid? Cook et al. ([10.1542/peds.2018-0458](#)) decided to answer

that question by looking at the association between state HPV legislation and adolescent sexual behaviors. Using the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System surveys between 2001-2015, the authors compared student report of sexual intercourse and condom usage before and after the legislation to states in which there was no legislation. More than 700,000 students reported intercourse in the last three months as well as more than 217,000 reported the recent use of condoms. The authors did not find that there was any increased association between sexual behaviors and the passage of legislation in favor of HPV education and/or vaccination. However, legislative programs did not result in less sexual intercourse or more condom use either. These results add to our understanding that promoting HPV vaccination does not increase sexual behaviors amongst teens—and that may be useful information to know for other states considering passage of similar legislation. Perhaps if your state has not yet passed such a bill, this article will give you some added momentum to advocate for such passage so at least you can take your best shot at those worried about state legislation would only increase risky teen sexual behaviors.

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