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PRESS RELEASE

LET'S DISCUSS VACCINATING GIRLS AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER

Honolulu - According to Representative Barbara Marumoto, "the Legislature and the health community should have a discussion on the pros and cons of mandating vaccinations to protect girls against cervical cancer". She is introducing a resolution asking for the Department of Health to conduct a study.

"We now have vaccines to prevent 70% of cervical cancer cases if provided to girls before they become sexually active. The vaccine is readily available through private insurers and Medicaid, but is not required by law. Although one state mandates vaccinations for girls entering middle school, other states are still assessing the situation," said Representative Marumoto.

"The issues to be discussed include the uninsured population, the cost to the patient, the number of shots required, opt-out exemptions and the need for an educational effort so people understand that cervical cancer is a preventable disease," Marumoto explained. With this information legislators can deal with any political opposition versus the benefits of vaccination.

One of the goals of Women in Government (WIG), an organization of women state legislators, is to wipe-out cervical cancer in ten years. The elimination of this dread disease can be done through vaccination in addition to regular Pap/HPV tests.

Last week WIG issued its annual "Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign". The report gave Hawaii a "Good Rating" for having low scores on 2008 mortality rate, incidence rate, Pap screening rate, uninsured numbers and for readily available having unrestricted testing for the human papilloma virus (HPV).

"Cervical cancer is scary because there are no symptoms. Almost 4,000 women in the U.S. die every year. It's the only cancer that doctors know the source, and it is the only cancer that we can vaccinate against," Marumoto concluded.