



Monday *MONITOR*

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TWO MORE RESTRICTIVE BILLS FILED

HB821, filed by Rep. Robert Onder (Allergy and Asthma specialist & Right To Life member) would require physicians to read the few women who present for a later term abortion a statement about fetal development that is unconfirmed within the medical community, *and* then require doctors to administer fetal anesthesia – a procedure that could increase health risks to the woman. Available science fails to support the conclusions drawn by the bill and its required statement.

SB432, filed by Sen. Gary Nodler, is a companion to Rep. Cynthia Davis' "Abstinence-Only/Sex Mis-Education" bill, HB716. This bill, referred to Senate Judiciary Committee, is one of the Governor's priorities and would deny students access to critically important, medically and factually accurate information on sexual health and birth control. By referring to the federal abstinence-only funding guidelines, sex education in Missouri would be prohibited from talking honestly about contraception.

REPRESENTATIVE PAGE TAKES LEAD ON CERVICAL CANCER VACCINE LEGISLATION

Rep. Sam Page, with co-sponsors Young, Lowe (44), Talboy, Yaeger, Holsman & Storch, filed **HB802** that would add the HPV vaccine that protects against cervical cancer to the list of required vaccines for girls entering middle school. Gardasil was approved by the FDA to be administered to females between the ages of 9 and 26 and protects against two of the most virulent strains of human papilloma virus (HPV) that cause more than 80% of cervical cancers.

HB92 HEARD IN COMMITTEE: PRO-CHOICE, ANTI-CHOICE WITNESSES OPPOSE

HB92, heard in House Crime Prevention last Tuesday, would punish a pregnant woman with up to 15 years in prison if she goes to term before she is able to overcome her drug problem. The bill would completely contradict current statute (passed in 1991) that rather than impose criminal sanctions, provides pregnant women with drug or alcohol problems priority access to treatment and prenatal care to increase the chances of a healthy birth. Studies have demonstrated that, *even while continuing prenatal substance use*, obtaining prenatal care reduces the risk of premature birth and increases health outcomes. A jail cell does not. Planned Parenthood, the Catholic Conference and Campaign Life Missouri were among the 10 witnesses in opposition; only the sponsor spoke in support.

TUESDAY IS NATIONAL "PUT PREVENTION FIRST" DAY OF ACTION !

On February 13th, in state Capitols across the country, and Washington DC, Planned Parenthood advocates for reproductive health care will celebrate a national day to **PUT PREVENTION FIRST**. Supporters will file bills that mirror Federal legislation filed by Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) and Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) – **HR819/S21** – that calls for increased access to contraception and comprehensive sex education. In Missouri, Sen. Joan Bray (D-24) and Rep. Robin Wright Jones (D-63) will introduce the **Missouri Prevention First Act** in a noon press conference in the Bingham Gallery. All supporters are welcome and encouraged to attend the press conference and to sign on to this common sense legislation.

PREVENTION FIRST = HEALTHY FAMILIES

PARENTS SHOULD ACT QUICKLY, USE HPV VACCINE [Editorial: Springfield News Leader, 2.08.07]

A vaccine won't make a child have sex.

Unfortunately, some critics of attempts to make a new cancer-preventing vaccine widely available think it will. They're dead wrong. Last year federal regulators gave the green light to Gardasil, a vaccine developed by Merck that prevents infection by strains of the human papilloma virus (HPV). These strains of HPV are responsible for 70 percent of cervical cancer cases in the United States. Cervical cancer is the second most deadly form of cancer for women in the United States. And there's a way to prevent it.

The American Academy of Pediatrics added the HPV vaccine to its recommended 2007 immunization schedule along with more traditional vaccinations for chickenpox and measles. If they can, parents should get the information about this vaccine and provide it for their daughters. Whether to use this vaccine shouldn't be controversial. It's a simple matter of saving lives.

The vaccine doesn't cause any serious side effects. The biggest problem with this vaccine so far is the price. A series of three shots can cost more than \$700. For families whose insurance doesn't cover this type of medical care, that's a huge amount of money. That's why it's good to see that the Missouri Foundation for Health has provided an \$11 million grant to make it available for families who can't afford it and who don't qualify for Medicaid. In Springfield, grant-funded vaccine is available at the Jordan Valley Community Health Centers and the OACAC Family Planning office. It's also available at health department offices in Lawrence, Webster, Taney, Dade, Polk and Stone counties.

In our way of thinking, there's no doubt that parents should take advantage of this grant and get their daughters vaccinated. The larger question is whether the government should play a role in requiring the vaccine. Last week, Texas Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, did just that through the use of an executive order. His action had a loophole, though, and parents could opt out. We don't call on Gov. Matt Blunt to follow in Perry's footsteps. It's too soon for that, and the price can be prohibitive for people. If anything, what the government should do first is help with education so people will know what the vaccine does and does not do. The vaccine won't protect against pregnancy or other sexually transmitted diseases.

But it will save lives.

And it's ridiculous to think that just because a child gets vaccinated against HPV, she will automatically become sexually irresponsible. It's a parent's responsibility to make sure that their children know what is and is not safe. This vaccine shouldn't force parents to squirm when talking with their children. Responsible parents raising children in 2007 will have to have uncomfortable conversations. A little discomfort is worth the lives the vaccine can save. If we can prevent cancer, we should do it.

Some advocates for the vaccine believe that cervical cancer can be eliminated completely through the use of this vaccine.

We hope they're right.

PRESIDENT'S 2008 BUDGET: MAJOR CUTS TO NATION'S HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

Last week, President Bush released the FY 2008 budget proposal, which would further undermine critical public health programs (such as Title X and Medicaid) that are already struggling to provide important reproductive health care services to millions of Americans. The budget would:

- ☛ Flat-fund the Title X family planning program, essential to women's healthcare
- ☛ Significantly cut Medicaid funding and services
- ☛ Cut \$500 million from the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) – a key family planning stream
- ☛ Substantially increase misleading abstinence-only program funding

View the [PPFA press release](#) for comments on President's FY08 Proposed Budget.