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Oregon House Passes Bill Designating March 4 as HPV Awareness Day

SALEM, Ore.— Today, the Oregon House of Representatives passed [HB 4135](#), designating March 4th of each year as HPV Awareness Day in Oregon. The bill encourages statewide efforts to increase awareness about HPV vaccination and routine cervical cancer screening.

With the passage of HB 4135, Oregon joins the international push led by the International Papillomavirus Society to recognize March 4th as a day focused on HPV prevention and education.

Representative Annessa Hartman (D-Gladstone/Oregon City), who was diagnosed with Stage 3 cervical cancer last year, introduced the bill following her own experience and conversations with families across Oregon.

“I have to be honest, I did not think my second-to-last bill as a legislator would be an ‘awareness day,’” Hartman told the House committee earlier this session. “But as many of us know, these awareness days are inspired by constituents, loved ones, or personal events. And in my case, the inspiration was both from a loved one and my personal experience.”

Last year, the Oregon legislature lost the late Rep. Hòa Nguyễn due to cervical cancer. During the public hearing, her brother, Tommy, testified in her memory and spoke about the importance of awareness and prevention: “My sister fought with strength and grace. But I often wonder, if there had been greater awareness, if preventative measures had happened sooner, if her concerns had been acted on more urgently, might she still be with us today? Somewhere in Oregon right now, there is an 11-year-old girl who could grow up to be the next Hòa Nguyễn. She deserves the chance my sister never had: to live a full life.”

HPV, or human papillomavirus, is the most common sexually transmitted infection and is responsible for the vast majority of cervical, vaginal, vulvar, anal, and penile cancers. The HPV vaccine prevents more than 90 percent of cancers caused by the virus, yet Oregon’s vaccination completion rate for adolescents remains at approximately 67.6 percent. Only 53.1 percent of Oregon women ages 25 to 44 are up to date on cervical cancer screening.

Rep. Scharf (R-Amity) shared that the issue is also deeply personal.

“In 2024, I had my own HPV related cancer scare, but I was one of the lucky ones. It was detected early, and it was benign. However, HPV risk does not go away, and I will continue to monitor it annually and for as long as I live. If HB 4135 helps raise awareness for just one

person and they get screened, and also get lucky, it's worth it. However, I hope this bill goes much further than that. I hope it starts a conversation about risk, about options, about choices, about the reality of HPV and about those we love and those we have lost to the cancers that this common virus creates.”

HB 4135 establishes an annual day to encourage the Oregon Health Authority, county health departments, school-based health centers, community clinics, and youth-serving organizations to share medically accurate, age-appropriate, and culturally responsive information about HPV prevention.

“This is not a mandate,” **Hartman** emphasized. “This is the first step. An opportunity to elevate the conversation, reduce stigma, and make sure families have the information they need.”

Access to HPV vaccination and screening remains uneven across Oregon, with rural communities, low-income families, and communities of color facing the greatest barriers. Supporters say an annual awareness day provides a low-cost, high-impact way to reinforce existing prevention efforts and close knowledge gaps that contribute to delayed diagnoses.

The bill now moves to the Senate for further consideration.

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