



Offices of Representatives Annessa Hartman, Scharf, and Senator Reynolds

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Oregon Senate Passes, Governor Kotek Signs Bill Designating March 4 as HPV Awareness Day

SALEM, Ore. — Today, on International HPV Awareness Day, the Oregon Senate unanimously passed [HB 4135](#), designating March 4 as HPV Awareness Day in Oregon and encouraging statewide efforts to increase awareness of HPV vaccination and routine cervical cancer screening.

With the passage of HB 4135, Oregon joins the international push led by the International Papillomavirus Society and becomes the second state in the country to recognize March 4 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. “These awareness days are inspired by loved ones, constituents, 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.

“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?” **Tommy** said. “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.

“The HPV vaccine is a cancer vaccine that prevents multiple cancers before they start,” said **Howard Chiou, M.D., Ph.D.**, medical director of communicable disease and immunizations at the Oregon Health Authority. “But Oregon’s immunization rates are uneven, and in 14 Oregon counties, fewer than 50% of adolescents are fully immunized. There’s an opportunity here to help protect people long before cancer ever takes hold.”

Rep. Anna Scharf (R-Amity), a chief sponsor of the bill, 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.”

Public health officials say awareness and access remain uneven across the state.

“Unfortunately, access to HPV vaccinations and cervical cancer screenings is uneven across Oregon, with substantial disparities affecting rural communities, low-income families, and communities of color,” said **Kim La Croix**, Public Health Director of Clackamas County. “Culturally responsive, community-based outreach — combined with increased awareness and affordable access to vaccination and cancer screening — is essential to protecting the most vulnerable people in Oregon from these largely preventable cancers.”

Medical providers say the legislation helps normalize conversations about prevention.

“The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists celebrates the passage of HB 4135 in Oregon,” said **Dr. Carrie Frederick, MD, MPH**. “By recognizing HPV Awareness Day, we are normalizing conversations about vaccination and screening, reducing stigma, and ensuring people have what they need to make informed decisions.”

HB 4135 encourages 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.

“It’s an honor to stand here today on March 4th - in honor of my friend Rep Hoa Nguyen, who died too soon, and to Rep Annessa Hartman, who is winning her battle against cancer, and to the 4000 American and 350,000 global deaths from cervical cancer,” said **Sen. Lisa Reynolds** (D-Portland). “Wear your turquoise ribbons today and every March 4th.”

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

The bill has been signed by the Governor, officially establishing today as Oregon’s first HPV Awareness Day.

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