School Entry Requirements for HPV Vaccine

What’s Known

For more than a decade, school entry requirements for HPV vaccine have generated substantial discussion.

- At least 42 US jurisdictions have introduced legislation to require HPV vaccine, fund the vaccine, or educate the public or school children about it.¹
- Only four jurisdictions currently require HPV vaccine for school entry: Rhode Island, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia (DC).¹ Opt-out provisions vary. The requirement for Virginia is only for girls, while the others are for both boys and girls.
- Most parents and other stakeholders support school entry requirements for HPV vaccine, but only when lenient opt-out provisions are included.²⁻⁴
- Early evaluations found little evidence that school entry requirements increased HPV vaccine uptake,⁵⁻⁶ perhaps because requirements were undermined by lenient opt-out provisions.

What’s New

Discussion of school entry requirements for HPV vaccine has continued in recent years, with stakeholders debating the ethical, political, and legal implications of these policies.⁷⁻⁸ Such debates are likely to continue in light of recent research suggesting that school entry requirements can be effective.

- A recent study found Rhode Island's school entry requirement to be associated with an 11% increase in HPV vaccine initiation for boys, but not girls.⁹
- Other jurisdictions with school entry requirements have high HPV vaccine coverage (DC 78%, Virginia 59%) compared to the nation as a whole (49%),¹⁰ but the extent to which this performance is due to school entry requirements is unknown.
What’s Next

Further consideration of school entry requirements for HPV vaccine may be important for some states, and the broader literature on school entry requirements can provide guidance. Key considerations include:

• Whether current rates are high enough to support requirements;
• Strategies for financing and implementation;
• The definition and use of exemptions;
• Strategies for addressing stakeholder concerns including concerns that introducing a new requirement will put existing requirements at risk; and
• Enacting or tightening requirements for other adolescent vaccines to make use of “spillover effects,” whereby these requirements improve HPV vaccination.  