



For Immediate Release

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## **LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS COMMIT TO 'END CERVICAL CANCER IN OUR LIFETIME'**

### **Lieutenant Governors to conduct personal outreach to more than 80,000 people**

The nation's 'second-in-commands' are committed to a public health campaign which aims to eliminate a cancer which kills thousands of women each year.

Lieutenant governors in ten states will distribute a total of 82,000 packets to educate constituents on the nearly preventable nature of cervical cancer. The states include Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Utah. *On 11-13-06, Virginia added as an eleventh state.*

"The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) is working to "End Cervical Cancer in our Lifetime," said NLGA Director Julia Hurst. "The American Cancer Society shows the U.S. death rate from cervical cancer down over the past few years, but the rate of invasive cervical cancer is up."

In 2006, 9,710 American women are expected to develop cervical cancer and about 3,700 will die from it, says the American Cancer Society. "Given these facts and the fact that cervical cancer is almost preventable, the members are proud to be part of this campaign," said Hurst.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a virus called human papillomavirus (HPV) causes 99.7% of all cervical cancer cases. Most sexually active adults will be infected with HPV at some point in their life. There are many types of HPV spread by skin to skin contact in the genital area. HPV causes no symptoms and usually goes away on its own. However, high-risk HPV which stays in the body a period of years can cause cervical cancer. The HPV causes cells to change leading to cancer. Cervical cancer can be prevented or cured by removing the abnormal cells before they become cancerous. A Pap test can detect the abnormal cells. Often, there are no early symptoms so women should have pap tests done regularly, says the National Women's Health Resource Center.

"By helping people make the connection between the virus and the cancer, there is a real opportunity to end cervical cancer," said Hurst.

The facts as outlined in the NLGA educational kit are as follows: The surest prevention of HPV infection is abstinence. If one becomes sexually active, limiting the number of sexual partners decreases the chance of infection. Use of condoms can reduce, but will not eliminate, the chance of HPV infection.

Medical experts urge women to commit to a Pap test regularly. "Low-cost and free Pap tests are available," said Hurst. "People can call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) to reach this state's program providing Pap testing to low-income, uninsured, and underserved women."

More cervical cancer information is available at [www.nlga.us](http://www.nlga.us).

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