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PRESS RELEASE

March 4 – World HPV Awareness Day The vaccine protects against 10 types of cancer A groundbreaking partnership to prevent and eliminate HPV-related cancers in Greece

March 4 is celebrated each year as World Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Awareness Day, a virus that infects 4 out of 5 people at some point in their lives, usually without symptoms, but with potentially serious health consequences.

On the occasion of this day, the **Institute of Applied Biosciences** of the Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (INAB/ CERTH), the **Hellenic HPV Society** and the **Hellenic Cancer Federation** (HELK), in collaboration with the **International Papillomavirus Society** (IPVS), are launching a new, coordinated Greek HPV awareness campaign, focusing on prevention and scientifically documented knowledge.

The campaign will be developed throughout 2026, with information actions for parents, adolescents, young adults and health professionals, in view of the 38th IPVS World HPV Congress to be held in Athens in October 2026.

During the press conference held on Thursday, February 26, at the Medical Association of Thessaloniki, representatives of the organizations that collaborate for the prevention and elimination of HPV-related cancers, emphasized that today the scientific community has for the first time the means to prevent one of the most important cancers in the world, cervical cancer, and to reduce the incidence of several other cancers. They also emphasized that the World Health Organization (WHO) has set clear goals for the global elimination of cervical cancer by 2030: 90% full vaccination coverage in girls up to 15 years of age, 70% coverage of women with HPV testing at ages 35 and 45, and 90% correct treatment of women with (pre)cervical cancer. As noted, in 2026 Greece remains low in both HPV testing and vaccination coverage. “The issue is not to cure, but to prevent,” it was emphasized.

Particular emphasis was placed on the need to vaccinate girls and boys from 9 years of age and older, before the start of sexual activity, while the indication for vaccination also applies to adults up to the age of 45.

According to the scientific data presented, the vaccine is extremely effective, has no side effects and can protect against up to 10 types of cancer.

Information campaign focused on prevention

The new campaign, implemented by the Hellenic HPV Society, INAB/ CERTH and ELLOK, in collaboration with the International Society for Human Papillomavirus, aims to persuade and effectively inform the public. In this context, two informational videos were created, one aimed at parents and one at adolescents, with the aim of strengthening active participation in decision-making on vaccination and addressing concerns. At the same time, the importance of informing teachers and older students in schools and cultivating a culture of prevention from an early age was highlighted.

You can watch the informational videos, one aimed at parents [here](#) and one aimed at teenagers [here](#).

Theodoros Agorastos, President of the Hellenic HPV Society, underlined that Greece in 2026 remains far from the goals set by the WHO, but with information and awareness raising we can achieve them. As he noted, our country is low in carrying out checks, however, thanks to the “PROLAMVANO” program, significant steps are being made. The message is clear, stressed Mr. Agorastos: “Prevention is possible. Vaccination saves lives. And Greece can achieve the global goals, as long as Society and the State act in a coordinated manner. In particular, the State must actively fulfill its obligation to inform all citizens about health and prevention issues.”

Anastasia Chatzidimitriou, Director of INAB/ CERTH presented the Institute’s actions and the new HPV information campaign. As she mentioned, within the framework of the holistic clinical research conducted at the Institute, INAB/ CERTH carries out pioneering studies that range from genetic analysis to patient information and empowerment actions.

An important example is a genetic analysis study for the detection of HPV, which was conducted on 13,000 women, where samples were sent to the laboratory through self-collection and then, based on the results, guidance was provided by gynecologists who participated in the study. The results were encouraging, with the participants stating that they would repeat the same methodology.

At the same time, the Institute coordinated the Precision Medicine Network in Oncology, which in action the genetic profile of the tumor was examined in 5,500 cancer patients, so that they could receive the appropriate and most effective treatment.

"We are close to patients and respond to their needs with solutions that are applicable and adapted to their every need", stressed Dr. Chatzidimitriou, underlining INAB/ CERTH's commitment to the practical application of scientific knowledge.

Andromache Athinaïou, Member of the Board of Directors of ELLOK, stressed that correct information is a basic prerequisite for improving the quality of life.

Despite the existence of prevention tools and examinations through the "S. Doxiadis" program, citizen participation remains limited. ELLOK, through a rich and systematic action at national and European level, brings together stakeholders, collects and processes data and uses this data in order to strengthen the essential information of society.

She made particular reference to the importance of information in schools, even through experiential and interactive actions for younger ages, emphasizing that public discourse must be characterized by clarity and certainty.

Dr. Christina Karamanidou, Researcher and Head of the Psychology Laboratory at INAB/ CERTH, underlined that the campaign was designed with the main objective of effectively informing the public, changing behavior through empowerment and enhancing their active participation in decision-making for prevention, mainly through vaccination.

As she mentioned, there are still misconceptions and procrastination around vaccination. "Scientific knowledge shows that vaccination is a health protection measure. Information can be a factor in shaping behavior and promoting public health," she noted.

Shared vision

The speakers agreed that increasing vaccination coverage is the most crucial step for the coming years. The goal is to inform and convince parents, address mistrust and provide evidence-based answers to the questions that arise.

The campaign featured videos created by INAB, one aimed at parents and one at adolescents, the video by the International Papillomavirus Society and the ELLOK Podcast.

The campaign will be developed in 2026, in view of the 38th IPVS World HPV Conference, which will be hosted in Athens, with the participation of leading scientists from around the world.

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