

Legislation Text

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Recognizing January as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, and commending the Pennsylvania National Cervical Cancer Coalition - NW Philadelphia Chapter Leader and The Survivor Diva Angela Reese for her work promoting awareness about cervical cancer.

WHEREAS, Almost all cervical cancers (99%) are linked to infection with high-risk human papillomaviruses (HPV), an extremely common virus transmitted through sexual contact. More than 42 million Americans are currently infected with HPV types that cause disease; and

WHEREAS, About 13 million Americans, including teens, become infected each year with HPV, which can cause cervical cancer and other HPV-associated cancers and conditions; and

WHEREAS, The American Cancer Society estimates that for 2021, over 14,480 American women will be diagnosed with new cases of invasive cervical cancer, and about 4,290 will die from cervical cancer; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that, "All women are at risk for cervical cancer." Cervical cancer most often affects women in the prime of their life and occurs most often in women over the age of 30; and

WHEREAS, Cervical cancer disproportionately impacts vulnerable Black, Hispanic, and American Indian groups of women and women from low-income households who lack access to health care, face stigma associated with screening exams, and experience difficulty obtaining other proven life-saving tools; and

WHEREAS, Cervical cancer is mainly caused by long-lasting infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a common virus that is passed from one person to another during sexual intercourse; and

WHEREAS, Most women having cervical cancer show no signs or symptoms in the early stages. When found early, cervical cancer is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life, but cervical cancer can have a major impact on a woman's reproductive function if found in the later stages; and

WHEREAS, Treatments used to fight cervical cancer can cause debilitating and life-changing physical, mental, and overall psychosocial health aftereffects; and

WHEREAS, Most importantly, the disease is preventable with vaccination, appropriate screening, and effective follow-up treatment of precancerous conditions; and

WHEREAS, Organizations such as the National Cervical Cancer Coalition, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the CDC emphasize the importance of early detection in treating cervical cancer with regular Pap tests for prevention; and

WHEREAS, The Pap test and the HPV test can be done in a doctor's office or clinic. Most insurance plans

cover these preventive services without a copay. However, many people with lower incomes or without health insurance may be unaware of the resources available, or may be unable to access them; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is one of the five counties in Pennsylvania with the highest rates of deaths from cervical cancer, (3.6 per 100,000). From 2012 to 2016 in Philadelphia, there were 437 new cases of cervical cancer. For every 100,000 women, 11 cases were reported. Over those years, 159 women died of cervical cancer. For every 100,000 women in Philadelphia, 4 died of cervical cancer; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia in 2016, the rate of new cervical cancer cases was higher among Hispanic women at 11.3 cases per 100,000 women than Black (11 cases), White (10.2 cases), and Asian/Pacific Islander (8 cases) women; and

WHEREAS, According to the American Cancer Society, screening rates for cervical cancer are also lower in Philadelphia than in other areas of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, 23.3 percent of Philadelphia's residents live below the poverty line with decreased access to care and higher rates of illness and death; and

WHEREAS, An increase in cancer screening rates would allow for many cancers to be avoided and for many cancers to be diagnosed at an earlier stage; and

WHEREAS, Without increased awareness surrounding prevention measures, and with continued barriers to adequate medical care, many people will continue to suffer from preventable cases of cervical cancer; and

WHEREAS, Regular cervical cancer screening tests are effective in detecting the disease early when it can be effectively treated. Early, effective treatment of pre-cancerous conditions prevents pre-cancerous cells from advancing on to become invasive cancer; and

WHEREAS, Cervical cancer vaccines are also available and - together with screening tests -provide a formidable and effective means of preventing this disease; and

WHEREAS, Increasing awareness among patients, parents, guardians, elected officials, and healthcare providers alike regarding the best use of prevention tools is a key component in safe-guarding women's health; and

WHEREAS, Cervical cancer is a preventable and treatable public health problem that we can end through vaccination, screening, and early treatment, yet, one woman dies every 2 minutes from this disease in the world; and

WHEREAS, At the federal level, H.R. 1550: the Promoting Resources to Expand Vaccination, Education, and New Treatments for HPV Cancers Act of 2021 (PREVENT HPV Cancers Act of 2021), supports efforts to increase HPV vaccination rates and otherwise prevent and treat cervical cancer and other cancers associated with HPV; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, WHO's Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer, which launched on November 17, 2020, outlines three key steps: vaccination, screening, and treatment. Successful implementation of all three steps could reduce more than 40% of new cases of the disease and 5 million related deaths by 2050; and

WHEREAS, Simple, cost-effective health interventions exist. We must protect and amplify the impact of existing U.S. investments in global health by integrating cervical cancer prevention and treatment into existing programs; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many parts of everyone's lives, and produced greater deficits in cervical cancer detection, so there is renewed urgency to getting these recommended screenings scheduled before a cancer can spread and become less treatable. Everyone is encouraged to maintain their scheduled screenings, doctors' appointments, and treatments without delay while observing coronavirus measures; and

WHEREAS, During 2022, we will mark the 31st Anniversary of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, which provides free screenings to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured women in every state, as well as many tribal organizations and territories; and

WHEREAS, Angela Reese, a thirteen-year survivor living with disabilities resulting from cancer treatments, has dedicated her life after cancer to promoting awareness and prevention, reducing stigma, and advocacy efforts. She has done this through publishing THESURVIVORDIVA.COM, a digital media resource for cervical cancer awareness and disabilities inclusion excellence, while providing leadership to the Pennsylvania National Cervical Cancer Coalition - NW Philadelphia Chapter; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania National Cervical Cancer Coalition - NW Philadelphia Chapter has implemented a social media campaign to bring awareness to cervical cancer prevention during the month of January, which is National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, in addition to programming with other NCCC Chapters across the country, the Global Initiative Against HPV and Cervical Cancer (GIAHC), medical experts, and stakeholders to further disseminate information regarding this preventable cancer to communities disproportionately diagnosed; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia City Council encourages all our citizens to recognize that cervical cancer is preventable, and to encourage and support the women in our lives in taking charge of their health and availing themselves of the tests and vaccines that have proven so effective in preventing cervical cancer. As we support the fighters, admire the survivors, and honor the taken, know that we have the means to eliminate this disease; it is incumbent on all of us to ensure we have the will to do so; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby Recognizes January as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, and commends the Pennsylvania National Cervical Cancer Coalition - NW Philadelphia Chapter Leader and The Survivor Diva Angela Reese for her work promoting awareness about cervical cancer.