



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
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PAT QUINN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
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Dear Editor,

Every year, more than 3,700 American women die of cervical cancer. Sadly, almost all of those deaths could be prevented by early detection and treatment.

To protect the lives and health of women throughout the Land of Lincoln, the State of Illinois is joining a 10-state campaign to End Cervical Cancer in Our Lifetime.

Olympian champion Jackie Joyner-Kersey, an Illinois native and one of the greatest American athletes of all time, is joining our effort to encourage every Illinois woman to get screened for cervical cancer.

Many women do not know that they are at risk for cervical cancer. The disease can be caused by a very common, contagious type of virus -- HPV. Scientists estimate that about 20 million Americans are infected with the virus, which often produces no symptoms whatsoever. Women infected with high-risk strains of HPV can develop abnormal cells in the cervix; left untreated, those abnormal cells can progress to cervical cancer.

Fortunately, when those abnormal cells are caught in time through a routine physical exam, there are safe and effective medical treatments to detect, prevent and cure cervical cancer. That's why it's so important for every woman to undergo regular screening.

Women who lack health insurance may qualify for free screenings and treatment under Governor Blagojevich's recently expanded Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program.

This year, experts say, about 640 women in Illinois will be newly diagnosed with cervical cancer; 190 will die of the disease. To make sure all the women in Illinois know about the routine tests that can help protect from this tragic and preventable cause of death, I am proud to join forces with Jackie Joyner-Kersey in this outreach effort. A legendary champion in track and field, she is now distinguishing herself as a champion for women's health as well.

To learn more about cervical cancer, and to find out if you or a woman you know might qualify for free medical care under the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, I invite you to visit our website, www.KeepingIllinoisHealthy.org or call the Illinois Women's Health-Line at 888-522-128, or TTY 800-547-0466.

Cervical cancer affects women of all ages, races and backgrounds. It's time for us to join together and end this disease.

Sincerely,

Pat Quinn

Lt. Governor