

## Statement of the Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance Against HPV and Cervical Cancer

NCD Alliance EMR – Taking Action Against HPV and Cervical Cancer

Today marks the first celebration of HPV Awareness Day and the EMR NCD Alliance is proud to join this initiative to increase the regional awareness understanding of cervical cancer and understanding of HPV and how it affects us all.

Cervical cancer, caused by HPV, is a leading cause of cancer deaths in women worldwide and in some countries within the Eastern Mediterranean Region. With [approximately 8,000 cervical cancer deaths](#) in 2012, and over 10,000 deaths predicted for 2020, it is critical for the Region to take immediate action to address HPV-related diseases and stop the rise of preventable cervical cancer deaths.

Since 2009, the WHO has recommended that the HPV vaccination be included in national immunization programs. Yet within the EMR, national HPV vaccination programs are absent from nearly all countries. Despite the WHO's recommendations to strengthen early detection of preventable cancer such as increase detection of cancers, particularly breast and cervical cancers, yet insufficient prevention and control measures have been taken to address HPV-related diseases, especially in the EMR. Only [9% of the entire Region](#) have HPV vaccination programs that are actively addressing the issue, a percentage that is unacceptably low.

HPV vaccination is one of the WHO best buys, (cost effective and evidence based interventions intervention to reduce cervical cancer morbidity and mortality).

To address the growing epidemic of HPV-related diseases within the framework of NCDs, the EMR NCD Alliance, a network of non for-profit Organizations advocating for NCD prevention and control including cervical cancer, are deeply concerned by the lack of attention and weak measures being taken to prevent cervical cancer in EMR

We call for more action from policymakers to politically and financially commit to HPV screenings and vaccine uptake. By implementing a comprehensive approach to increase awareness, screenings and vaccinations within the Region, HPV-related diseases and cervical cancer mortality rates will decrease and more lives will be saved.

The health of women and children is crucial for a strong society and no family should suffer health or financial hardships that come with cervical cancer. In 2018, we know how to effectively prevent, detect and treat HPV-related diseases and stop the rise of cervical cancer. There are no excuses, key decision makers need to step up the fight against HPV-related diseases and cervical cancer. The time to act is now.