

Increasing Awareness and Education of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) in Yukon

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Introduction & Background

- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in Canada and across the world. About seven out of 10 women will have at least one type of HPV infection over their lifetime.
- Studies carried out in northern Canada suggest that HPV rates for Northern women are higher than in other parts of Canada¹.
- The HPV prevalence study in Yukon demonstrated an overall prevalence rate of 24% in Yukon women, with higher rates in young women¹.
- The HPV study also demonstrated an association between presence of HPV and number of sexual partners, and an association between presence of HPV and abnormal Pap tests.
- In Yukon, 1 to 2 women develop cervical cancer each year and over 200 are referred for abnormal Pap tests.
- The purpose of the "Increasing Awareness and Education of the Human Papillomavirus in Yukon" project is to educate about HPV, risky behaviours, and ways to decrease and prevent HPV.
- This project is being led by Dr. Brendan Hanley, Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health, in partnership with the Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research and the Yukon Government's Department of Health and Social Services.
- The project is guided by a Steering Committee, which includes First Nations, health workers, researchers, educators, and others.
- The timeframe of this project is 18 months (August 2011 to March 2012).
- The project will provide Yukoners with current and timely information on the role of HPV in causing cervical cancer, and on best practices for remaining healthy, including getting immunized against HPV and obtaining regular Pap tests.

Methods

- Process:**
- Established an open-membership HPV Steering Committee: Chief Medical Officer of Health Yukon, AICBR, Yukon Government Health & Social Services: Community Nursing; Yukon Communicable Disease Control; Health Promotion; Communications, Council of Yukon First Nations, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, Ta'an Kwächän Council, Champagne & Aishihik First Nation, Kluane First Nation.
 - All project processes are conducted under the direct guidance of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee meets on a bi-weekly to monthly basis.
 - Established a Terms of Reference and internal communications plan.
 - Collected existing materials in Canada and evaluated them for possible adaptation to Yukon.
 - Determined target audiences: The overall target audience for this project is **all Yukon people**, with a specific focus on sub-target groups. Sub-target groups include:
 - Parents of Girls in Grade Six (ages 11-12)**
Rationale: Girls in Grade Six eligible for publicly funded vaccine, but require parental consent. This is when parents start to talk about sex and kids start to hit puberty. The younger the age, the greater the immunity.
 - Parents of Girls in Grade Five (ages 9-10)**
Rationale: Parents can start to prepare for next year and make a decision about the vaccination. Creates a broader context and opens the door to talk about sexual health, cancer prevention.
 - Girls, Including Girls At-Risk (<19 years old)**
Rationale: These girls are likely to be already sexually active, may not be in the healthcare system, or have access to caring adults. They may also have little to no knowledge about HPV and sexual health risks.
 - Healthcare Providers (Immunizers/Non-immunizers)**
Rationale: Healthcare providers can have inconsistent attitudes about the immunization and may be supportive or unsupportive. One-on-one communication is very important, healthcare providers must have accurate information and positive attitudes about the vaccine.
 - Identified key messages, developed an external communications plan.
 - Hosted a training workshop for Yukon First Nation community health workers.

- Evaluation:**
- Developed an evaluation tool, to be used pre and post education interventions. The tool was developed to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and to assess the current state of general knowledge about HPV, risk, and prevention factors in the Yukon. Results from the pre and post evaluations will be used to inform the education strategies and tools developed throughout the HPV education campaign.
 - Overall project success will also be partially measured by 'pre-project' measure of Pap test and immunization rates in the Yukon and 'post-project' measurement of these same rates.

Goals & Objectives

- The purpose of this project is to:
- Raise awareness and educate Yukon residents about HPV so they have a greater and more meaningful understanding of the Human Papillomavirus.
 - Increase awareness of the risks and protective factors to reduce exposure to HPV.
 - Increase Pap test screening and HPV immunization uptake.
- The overall goals of this project are to:
- Equip individuals with the tools and information required to make healthy choices, especially with regards to risk factors for HPV infection.
 - Reduce HPV rates and associated illnesses in the Yukon.



Photos: Yukon First Nation Community Health Champions and their display boards to be used for education and awareness-raising in their communities.



Photo: Dr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon Chief Medical Officer of Health), Jody Butler Walker (AICBR), the Hon. Minister Leona Aglukag, Bree Blotner (AICBR) and Katelyn Friendship (AICBR) at the official announcement for the "Increasing Awareness and Education of the Human Papillomavirus in Yukon" project. Missing from photo is Shawn O'Donovan.

HPV Evaluation Survey Questions

True or False:

1. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) worldwide. T F
2. A condom is all you need to protect against HPV. T F
3. Chances are you will get some form of HPV in your lifetime and not have any signs or symptoms. T F
4. HPV may cause genital warts in males and females. T F
5. HPV infection can lead to cancer of the penis and anus. T F
6. HPV is estimated to cause about 99% of cervical cancers. T F
7. Immunization can prevent certain types of HPV. T F
8. HPV only affects girls and young women. T F
9. The best way to screen for cervical changes due to HPV is a routine Pap test. T F
10. The HPV immunization is available free of charge for Yukon girls and women aged 9-18. T F

Participant Identification
Now that you've answered these questions it would be useful to know something about you. Please note this section is optional.

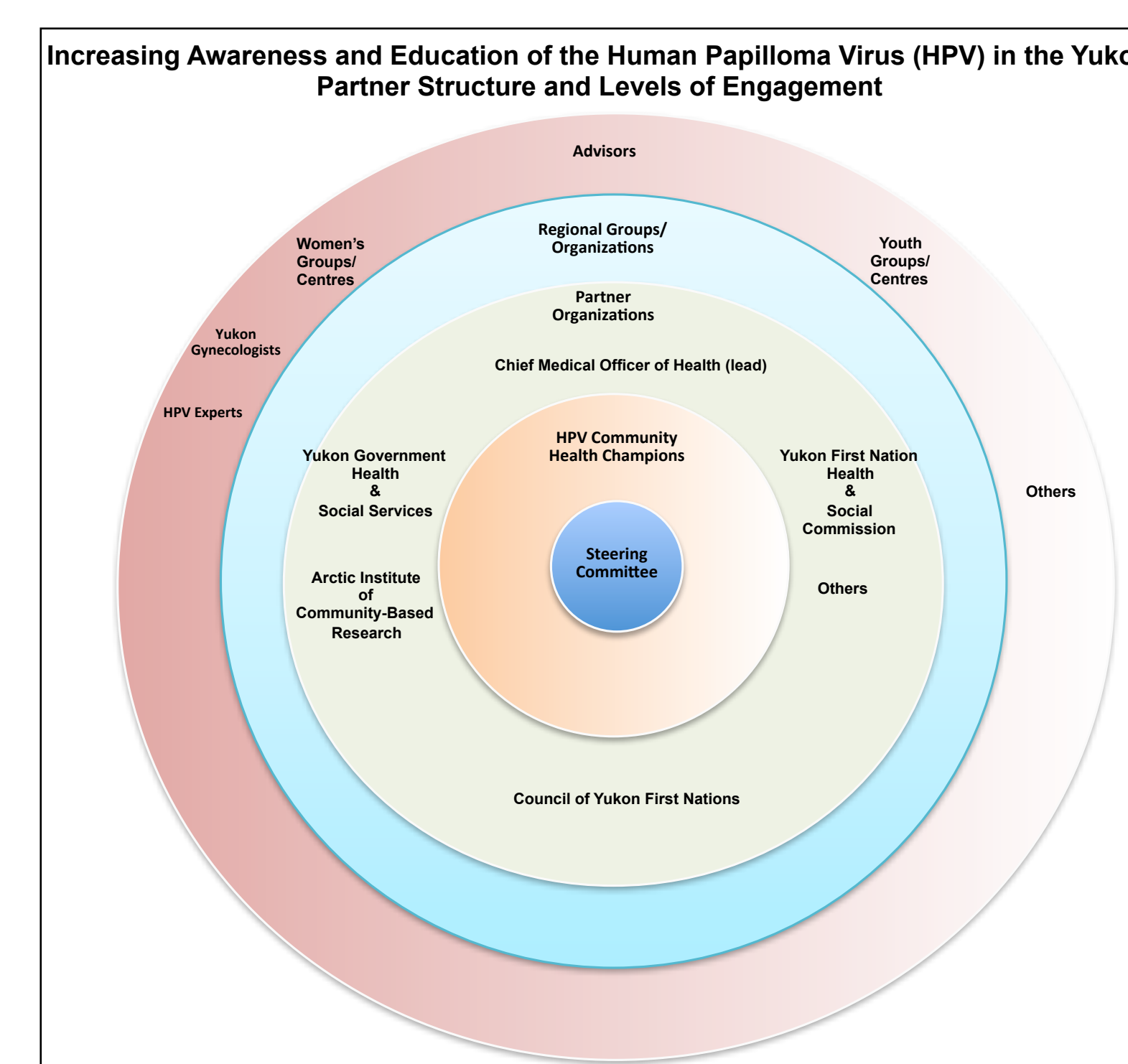
To which age group do you belong:
(19-18) _____
(19-25) _____
(26-40) _____
(41-59) _____
(60+) _____

Gender:
Male _____
Female _____
Other _____

What type of community do you live in:
Whitehorse _____
Rural Yukon _____

Yukon
Health and Social Services

Evaluation Tool used to assess effectiveness of HPV education interventions.

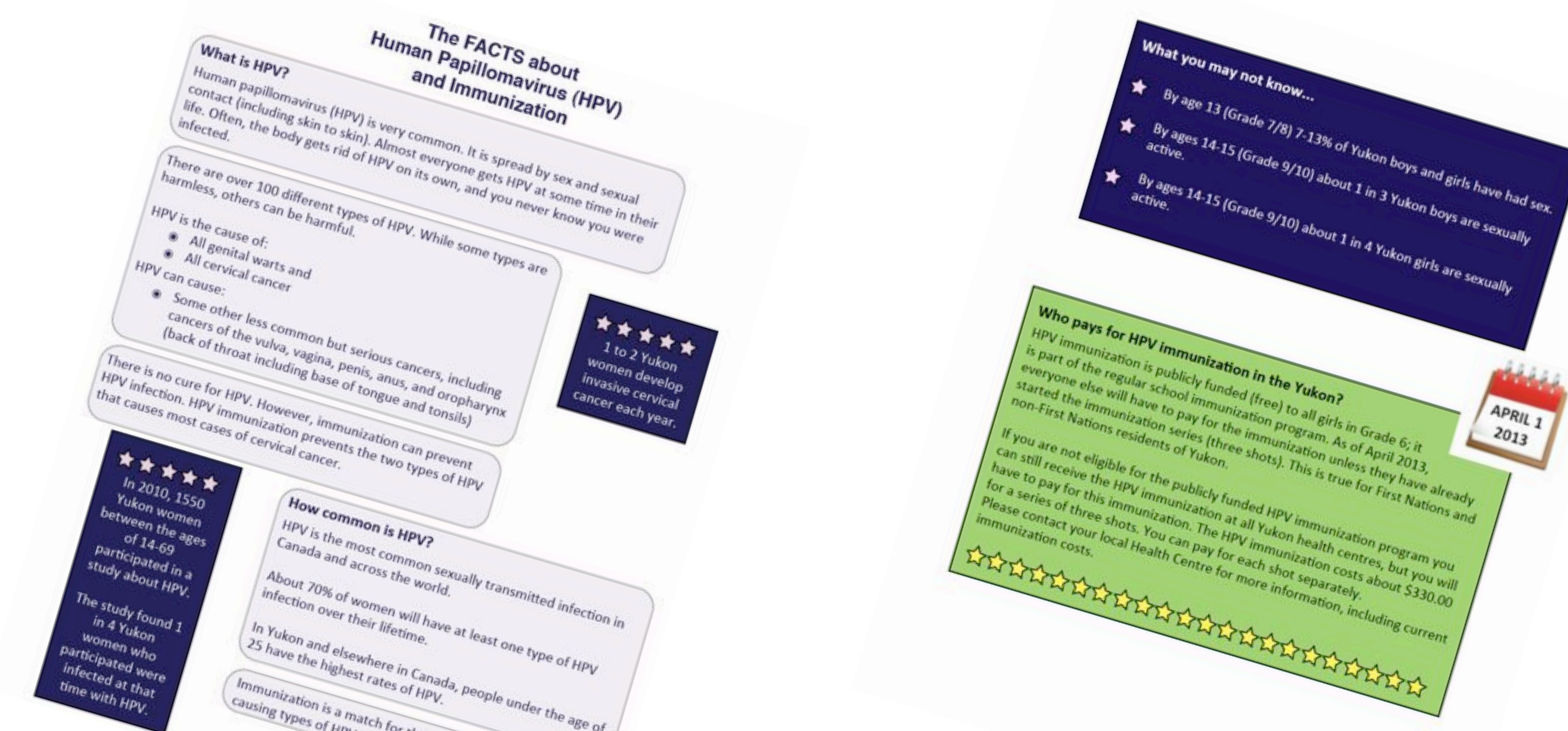


HPV Project Partner Structure Diagram

Key Results

- Expected Results:**
- Yukoners have a meaningful understanding of HPV that will encourage healthy choices and prevent further HPV-related illness. This will be demonstrated through improved sexual health practices, increased Pap screening and HPV immunization uptake.
- Key Highlights and Success to Date:**
- A collaboration of people from a diverse set of backgrounds and expertise, who are committed to working together to develop successful education and awareness-raising interventions with respect to HPV in the Yukon.
 - Developed a process for decision-making and communications within the Steering Committee.
 - Developed an evaluation tool to determine pre/post education interventions.
 - Increased knowledge and capacity within Steering Committee related to HPV education.
 - Steering Committee has a clear, comprehensive plan for education and awareness-raising implementation.
 - Invited to each Yukon First Nation community's General Assembly as a venue for HPV awareness-raising.
 - Creation of a HPV fact booklet and display boards to be used throughout the project at various events.
 - The fact booklet will be adopted and used by Yukon Government in the fall as part of their immunization program, facilitating consistent messaging and collaboration between different organizations.
 - Successful training of community health workers on HPV, building local capacity and key champions for continuing education and awareness-raising in their communities (with the support of the Steering Committee). 18 people from 10 different communities came together to learn about HPV. By providing training to on-the-ground health promoters, it ensures cultural relevancy with the Yukon First Nation population, while building local capacity and empowerment.
 - Use of pre/post evaluation tool at the HPV training. Pre session, 50% of participants (N=12) answered all 10 questions correctly. Post session, 90% (N=10) answered all questions correctly, indicating an increased knowledge of HPV from the training.
 - Collaboration demonstrated between and within communities.

- Unanticipated Events:**
- In February 2012, the Yukon Government changed their immunization policy from a broad public offer to women, to a more targeted school-based program, to align with other practices around the country.
 - While we have not moved away from our approach for providing general messaging around HPV, we still want to ensure that Yukon women are aware of the changes to the immunization policy so that they can make informed and educated decisions about being immunized, while there is still opportunity with the publicly funded program.



Next Steps

- Build on HPV resources and distribute throughout the Yukon.
- Host HPV training session for healthcare providers.
- Continue education and awareness campaign by attending various community events throughout the Yukon.

Conclusions

The project will produce a territorial-wide capacity to meaningfully engage in the development and implementation of a community-based education and awareness program, and facilitate linkages between and within Yukon communities, First Nation governments, territorial, and federal governments, and NGOs; and will produce tools to increase HPV awareness to be used long after this project is completed.

¹Ying, J., Hanley, B., Brassard, P., Severini, A., Lo, J., O'Donovan, S., Duncan, L., Zhong Cheng, L., Tohme, S., Mao, Y., Morrison, H. Human Papillomavirus infection and the association with abnormal pap findings in Yukon, Canada. *Journal of Lower Genital Tract Disease* (in press).