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Wuchner Proposes Responsible Approach for HPV Vaccine Issues

FRANKFORT, KY - In today's House Health and Welfare committee meeting State Representative Addia Wuchner (R-Burlington) proposed a compromise to solve the issues surrounding House Bill 345. The bill would require all girls entering middle school to be vaccinated for the Human Papillomavirus Virus (HPV).

"I want to commend the researchers and vaccine manufacturers for developing the HPV vaccine," said Rep. Wuchner. "This vaccine brings with it the hope of reducing cervical cancer and 70 percent of the HPV strains that cause cervical cancer in women."

In the meeting Rep. Wuchner cited evidence from the American College of Pediatricians is opposed to mandating this type of vaccine. Rep. David Watkins (D-Henderson) and Dr. Tim Bricker, Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Kentucky are both advocates for mandating the vaccine. They both appeared challenged when Rep. Wuchner informed the committee of the American College of Pediatricians position on this issue. The groups says they are opposed to any legislation that would require an HPV vaccine in order to attend school.

Rep. Wuchner is now prepared to file a committee substitute to House Bill 345. This substitute would direct the State Department of Public Health to recommend the HPV vaccine for public and private middle school aged girls, but would not require the vaccine. Another component of the substitute would be a three-pronged approach for public awareness, education, and a prevention plan on HPV and cervical cancer. As a

part of Rep. Wuchner's plan, the Department of Public Health would be required to report back to the Interim Joint Committee on Health and Welfare on December 1, 2007, and every six months there after.

"While I fully support and recommend this vaccine," added Wuchner. "It will be most effective when administered along with, a strong educational component and while respecting the rights of parents to make informed medical decisions for their children."

"This is an opportunity for us to educate the public on the importance of the vaccine and clinical screenings and pap tests while supporting universal access to the vaccine," added Rep. Wuchner. "We need to make sure that we educate the public on the benefits and compliance of the vaccine, which is given in a series of three inoculations."

The bill was scheduled to be up for a vote during a recess in the House of Representatives. However, that did not occur and appears to be on hold for now.