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**SR-55** (2023-2024)

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ENROLLED JANUARY 25, 2024

PASSED IN SENATE JANUARY 25, 2024

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

## SENATE RESOLUTION

**NO. 55**

Introduced by Senator Alvarado-Gil

January 17, 2024

Relative to Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SR 55, Alvarado-Gil.

WHEREAS, Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States and the leading cause of cervical cancer in women. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 9 out of 10 cervical cancers are caused by HPV, making it one of the most preventable cancers; and

WHEREAS, Cervical cancer starts in the cells lining the cervix, which is the lower part of the uterus, or womb. The cervix connects the body of the uterus, or the upper part where a fetus grows, to the vagina, or birth canal. Cancer starts when cells in the body begin to grow out of control; and

WHEREAS, Cervical cancer is most frequently diagnosed in women between 35 and 44 years of age, inclusive, with the average age at diagnosis being 50 years of age. It rarely develops in women younger than 20 years of age. Many older women do not realize that the risk of developing cervical cancer is still present as they age. More than 20 percent of cases of cervical cancer are found in women over 65 years of age; and

WHEREAS, In 2023, the American Cancer Society estimated that 13,960 new cases of invasive cervical cancer would be diagnosed in the United States, and that about 4,310 women would die from cervical cancer. In 2022, 1,640 California women were diagnosed with cancer of the cervix. That means approximately 11 percent of the nation's HPV-attributable cancers occur among Californians. An estimated 540 women died as a result; and

WHEREAS, Cervical cancer in women can often be found early, and sometimes even prevented, by having regular screening tests. If detected early, cervical cancer is one of the most successfully treatable cancers. Cervical cancer was once one of the

most common causes of cancer death for American women. The cervical cancer death rate dropped significantly with the increased use of the Pap test. This screening procedure can find changes in the cervix before cancer develops. It can also find cervical cancer early when it is small and easier to cure; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, the HPV test has been approved as another screening test for cervical cancer because almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV. The HPV test looks for infection by high-risk types of HPV that are more likely to cause precancers and cancers of the cervix. The HPV test can be used alone as a primary HPV test, or at the same time as the Pap test, called a cotest; and

WHEREAS, Hispanic women have the highest risk of developing cervical cancer, about 1.5 times higher than non-Hispanic White and Asian and Pacific Islander women. African American women have the second highest risk of developing cervical cancer and are more likely to die of cervical cancer than any other group. These statistics underscore the importance of increased education within these communities; and

WHEREAS, The American Cancer Society recommends that people with a cervix who are 25 to 65 years of age, inclusive, with an average risk for cervical cancer get an HPV test every five years. Cotesting that combines an HPV test with a Pap test every five years is another option. If an HPV test is not available, a Pap test alone should be done every three years; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate proclaims January 2024 as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month in the State of California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate encourages all Californians, the State Department of Public Health, and the State Department of Health Care Services to observe the month and conduct appropriate activities that support prevention, including promoting screening and educational outreach to all eligible Californians, increase the awareness of HPV-attributable cancer and prevention measures within the medical and public health community, and implement programs to raise awareness about the causes and symptoms of, as well as prevention measures for, HPV-attributable cancers; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.