

YWEP AND CWPE HAVE LOTS OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT GARDASIL AND MERCK

HERE ARE SOME OF OUR CONCERNS

****Why is Gardasil being mandated so QUICKLY?** This vaccine was on the market for 6 months when it became mandated in Texas. By comparison, the vaccine for Hepatitis B was on the market for almost 20 years and very well tested before community based organizations pushed for the mandate. Because this has happened so fast, there are no real answers about the long term impact on girls and women's health and well being.

****Why is this vaccine ONLY for girls and women?** Boys and Men are carriers of HPV. Boys and Men can get anal warts (caused by HPV) and anal cancer. They can also transmit HPV to girls, women and boys & men. Why girls are being targeted for this vaccine— especially when it has clearly not had enough testing.

****Why is this vaccine being mandated in Schools when most schools refuse to do SEX education & condom distribution?** The first state to mandate this vaccine was Texas. Texas does not allow sex education or condoms in schools. We feel like giving this vaccine without offering girls information about their bodies and sexually transmitted diseases removes the possibility for empowerment and autonomy to make a CHOICE. Texas' state mandate also controls access to school (if you don't get it you can't attend the sixth grade) which implies the state knows best about our bodies and lives. This has never worked for the safety and security of women and girls.

****What is the REAL connection between MERCK and Politicians?**

MERCK has made donations to political campaigns (such as Governor Perry in Texas) and spent lots of money on marketing to push this vaccine. We are skeptical of this alliance. MERCK stands to gain a lot of money from this vaccine being mandated in schools because it means that states will have to buy the drug. MERCK can also use these mandates to further their research about the long term effects.

SELF CARE TIPS

Did you know its possible to do your own examination of your vagina and cervix?

You can also go to this website for detailed steps for doing your own self exam: <http://www.fwhc.org/health/selfcare.htm>

You can check out your vagina with a mirror and flashlight to see what's going on even if you don't have a speculum. Sit down on the floor and spread your legs in front of a mirror. Spread your labia with your fingers and use the flashlight to help you see inside.

If you have a grey, green or yellow discharge you might have an infection. A white discharge is normal.

Get familiar with the way you smell and the color of your vagina so that you can catch signs of infection quicker. An acidic smell is normal. If your smell is stronger than usual, you might have an infection.

TAKE ACTION! ASK YOURSELF WHAT DO MY SISTAS NEED? HERE ARE SOME IDEAS



- Create a safe space to have an open conversation about Gardasil and HPV. Find out how what the girls and young women think in your neighborhood or community!
- Write your senator and ask that the legislation to mandate this vaccine be stopped until the long term effects are clear!
- Get information about Safer Sex and STD's and educate yourself and your Sistass about how to stay safe. Check out positive.org for great information.
- Gardasil costs & availability varies from state to state. Find out where girls can get it if they want it in your area! Check out: <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/lrl/50statetracking.htm>

