

## January is Cervical Health Month

*Early detection is the key to saving lives*



*Prevention and early detection of cancer are the keys to a healthy life.*

January is Cervical Health Month, a valuable opportunity to raise public awareness about the importance of prevention, screening and treatment of cervical cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 12,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year. Sadly, this disease claims the lives of 4,000 women annually.

According to the Latino Reproductive Health Project, Latinas are diagnosed with cervical cancer at nearly twice the rate of non-Hispanic white women. Several factors contribute to the higher occurrence of cervical cancer among Latinas, including lack of access to health care, language barriers and limited information about

Southwest. "Because Planned Parenthood is most often associated with contraceptive services many people aren't aware that we are one of the largest providers of cervical cancer screening in California. Not only does Planned Parenthood provide no-to-low-cost breast and cervical health screenings, we also offer Gardasil, the vaccine which reduces the risk of contracting the highly contagious Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which causes cervical cancer."

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that at least half of all adults in the United States will contract HPV at some point. Because the virus is contagious, it is wise for women to have a cervical cancer screening on a regular basis. "From age 21, women with

vider, who is familiar with an individual's medical history, is the best resource for a woman."

Prevention and early detection of cancer precursors are keys to saving lives. Early signs of cervical abnormalities and effective treatments of such conditions are treated at Planned Parenthood health centers.

"Planned Parenthood is here for every community and works to ensure that every woman has access to the best reproductive health care available," says Sheehan. "We encourage all women to take a few moments and think about what she can do to help reduce her risk of cervical cancer. Perhaps it is the HPV vaccine. Or if it is time for a well-woman exam, make an appointment today."